



The standards based approach and the teaching of soft skills :

A correlation study

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Abstract:

The aims of this study is to define the role of standards based approach in the formation of soft skills in secondary and middle schools.

This research paper is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and the practical one. This work outlines the results of a questionnaire which was carried out to find out the teacher's approach of teaching and it's role in developing soft skills. To enact this study, a sample of 55 secondary and middle school English teachers was randomly collected from different secondary schools. A questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument based on my personal experience in schools. Beside the questionnaire, I designed an observation in order to explore and investigate a wide range of questions. This observation was done during my work as a teacher in many schools for many years. For the relationship between standards based approach and soft skills, the results showed that standards based approach is ineffective in teaching soft skills ; it developed just reading and writing, and does not contribute to the development of speaking and soft skills .

The relationship between the two variables (standards based approach and soft skills,) was measured using correlation studies.



1-Introduction

1-1 general introduction

For many teachers , curriculum has become a prescribed set of academic standards, instructional pacing has become a race against clock to cover the standards , and the sole goal of teaching has been reduced to raising students scores on. but nowadays the teaching of soft skills to student very important, the attainment of these skills will make a difference in quality of teaching and effective learning .

The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools .

Teaching is a complex act ,requiring giving students a wide range of knowledge and skills including hard and soft skills to successfully meet the demands of the classroom and to enable students to be a successful member in the society . Hence , soft skills development should be included into school's program. Further more schools should combine hard skills and soft skills in the curriculum, and choose carefully the approach that ensure that.

1-2. Research question :

To examine the relationship between standards based approach and soft skills we must ask question about : what is standards based approach ? and what is soft skills ?

How standards influence the quality of teaching and learning ? what is the impact of standards based approach on the quality of education in general and specially on the teaching of soft skills ? and the most important question is : to what extent does standards based approach help in teaching soft skills ?



1-3. Aims of study :

The aims of this study is to difine the role of standards based approach in the formation of soft skills in secondary and middle schools.

1-4 .Reaserch methode :

Taking into account the aim and objectives set in the study , the following methods of research were used : search method, theoretical analysis and synthesis, comparative method, definition of causal relationships, observation and survey.

2.Literature review

2-1definition of standards based approach

In education, the term standards-based refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In schools that use standards-based approaches to educating students, learning standards—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education—determine the goals of a lesson or course, and teachers then determine how and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations described in the standards.

In the United States, most standards-based approaches to educating students use state learning standards to determine academic expectations and define “proficiency” in a given course, subject area, or grade level. The general goal of standards-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. If students fail to meet expected learning standards, they typically receive additional instruction, practice time, and academic support to help them



achieve proficiency or meet the learning expectations described in the standards. Standards-based learning is common in American elementary schools, but it is becoming more widely used in middle and secondary schools.

In most cases, *standards-based learning*, *standards-based instruction*, or *standards-based education*, among other similar terms, are synonyms for proficiency-based learning or competency-based learning (two terms that are themselves synonymous). Defining *standards-based learning* is further complicated by the fact that educators not only use a wide variety of terms for the general approach, but the terms may or may not be used synonymously from place to place. A few of the other common synonyms include *mastery-based*, *outcome-based*, and *performance-based* education, instruction, or learning, among others ¹

Standards describe also the goals of schooling, the destinations at which students should arrive at the end of the unit or term. For example, most standards expect students graduating from high school to be able to write for different audiences in different formats -- things such as reports, instructions, literary criticism, and persuasive and reflective essays -- and to demonstrate a command of standard written English.

Note that the standard doesn't prescribe how to get the students to this destination -- that is determined by the curriculum. Standards do not prescribe any particular curriculum: National standards don't mean that local ability to choose teaching materials and methods are compromised. Standards indicate what students should know and should be able to do at grade 4, grade 8, grade 12. The teacher can choose whatever curriculum he or she finds appropriate to help the students meet the standards.

We have Two kinds of standards are referred to -- content standards and performance standards. Content standards indicate what students should know and should be able to do. For example, students should be able to write and speak for a



variety of purposes and for diverse audiences, using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.

A performance standard measures how well a student's work meets the content standard. A performance standard has levels (4, 3, 2, and 1; or advanced, proficient, novice, and basic) and frequently examples of student work are provided for each level.

Performance standards are essentially the same as rubrics. Rubrics describe what student work must consist of to get a certain score. Rubrics or performance standards list one of the characteristics of student work -- for example, problem-solving in mathematics or persuasive writing in English/language arts. All examples of problem-solving or persuasive writing, no matter what the topic, should contain these characteristics.

2-2 Standards-Based vs. Standards-Referenced

The distinction between *standard-based* and *standards-referenced* is often a source of confusion among educators and the public—in part because the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but also because the distinction between the two is both subtle and nuanced. In brief, *standards-referenced* means that what gets taught or tested is “referenced” to or derived from learning standards (i.e., standards are the source of the content and skills taught to students—the original “reference” for the lesson), while *standards-based* refers to the practice of making sure students learn what they were taught and actually achieve the expected standards (i.e., that students meet a defined standard for “proficiency”). In a standards-referenced system, teaching and testing are guided by standards; in a standards-based system, teachers work to ensure that students actually learn the expected material as they progress in their education.

Another way of looking at it is that standards-referenced refers to *inputs* (what is taught) and standards-based is focused on *outputs* (what is learned).



While a particular course may be standards-referenced, for example, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is standards-based in the sense that the term is predominately used by educators. However, all standards-based curricula, instruction, and tests are—by necessity—standards-referenced. For example, all fifty states in the United States have developed and adopted learning standards that schools and teachers are expected to follow when they create academic programs, courses, and other learning experiences (before the 1980s and 1990s, states did not have learning standards). In theory, these educational policies suggest that all American public schools either are or should be teaching a standards-referenced curriculum. Yet comparatively few public schools are authentically standards-based in the sense that students are required to demonstrate achievement of expected standards, and meet defined proficiency expectations, as they progress through their education. For a more detailed discussion, see proficiency-based learning.

The following examples will help to illustrate the distinction between *standards-based* and *standards-referenced*:

Assessment: Say a teacher designs a standards-referenced test for a history course. While the content of the test may be entirely standards-referenced—i.e., it is aligned with the expectations described in learning standards—a score of 75 may be considered a passing score, suggesting that 25 percent of the taught material was not actually learned by the students who scored a 75. In addition, if only test scores and assignments are summed and averaged, the teacher may not know what specific standards students have or have not met. For example, a student may be able to earn a “passing” grade in a ninth-grade English course, but still be unable to “demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking” or “demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings”—two ninth-grade standards taken from the Common Core State Standards. If the teacher uses a standards-based approach to assessment, however, students would only “pass” a test or course after demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills described in the expected standards. The students may need to retake a test several times or redo an assignment, or they may need additional help from the teacher or other educational



specialist, but the students would need to demonstrate that they learned what they were expected to learn—i.e., the specific knowledge and skills described in standards.

Curriculum: In most high schools, students typically earn credit for passing a course, but a passing grade may be an A or it may be a D, suggesting that the awarded credit is based on a spectrum of learning expectations—with some students learning more and others learning less—rather than on the same learning standards being applied to all students equally. And because grades may be calculated differently from school to school or teacher to teacher, and they may be based on different learning expectations (for example, some courses may be “harder” and others “easier”), students may pass their courses, earn the required number of credits, and receive a diploma without acquiring the most essential knowledge and skills described in standards. In these cases, the curricula taught in these schools may be standards-referenced, but not standards-based, because teachers are not evaluating whether students have achieved specific standards. In standards-based schools, courses, and programs, however, educators will use a variety of instructional and assessment methods to determine whether students have met the expected standards, including strategies such as demonstrations of learning, personal learning plans, portfolios, rubrics, and capstone projects, to name just a few.

Grading: In a standards-referenced course, grading may look like it traditionally has in schools: students are given numerical scores on a 1–100 scale and class grades represent an average of all scores earned over the course of a semester or year. In a standards-based course, however, “grades” often look quite different. While standards-based grading and reporting may take a wide variety of forms from school to school, grades are typically connected to descriptive standards, not based on test and assignment scores that are averaged together. For example, students may receive a report that shows how they are progressing toward meeting a selection of standards. The criteria used to determine what “meeting a standard” means will be defined in advance, often in a rubric, and teachers will evaluate learning progress and academic achievement in relation to the criteria. The reports students receive might use a 1–4 scale, for example, with 3s and 4s indicating that students have met



the standard. In standards-based schools, grades for behaviors and work habits—e.g., getting to class on time, following rules, treating other students respectfully, turning in work on time, participating in class, putting effort into assignments—are also reported separately from academic grades, so that teachers and parents can make distinctions between learning achievement and behavioral issues.

2-3 .Standards-Based Instruction

Standards-Based Instruction (SBI) is a teaching method that is based on standards of skill mastery.

Deeply rooted in research and supported by significant evidence and observable experience, SBI is a student-centered form of pedagogy (the craft of teaching children) and curricular design.

A “standard” (sometimes called a “learning standard” or a “content standard”) is a set of conditions that a child should achieve that mean a child has truly gained a given set of knowledge or a given skill. In short, it is a concrete description of what a student should be able to understand and be able to do. Standards are generally written in such a way that *all children should be able to meet them*, and that any given child can theoretically exceed them. This stands in contrast to traditional systems that may expect all students to be “perfect” or “free of errors,” and “punish” students who do not. The framework of standards gives a concrete set of expectations to schools on what to teach, and liberates professional educators on exactly *how* to teach, thereby allowing schools to better meet the needs of individual children. At Discovery, we are deeply committed to using proven, research-backed methods in *how* we teach the standards.

The Virginia Department of Education sets standards for all schools in the Commonwealth, and Arlington Public Schools establishes a framework of expectations for instructing those skills. The links on the left will take you to the standards we use, as determined by Arlington Public Schools.



At Discovery, teachers collaborate to genuinely understand what is needed to advance each student's learning from wherever they begin to mastering those skills. Research-based techniques and designs form the heart of our work with each student, as each of our highly-qualified professional educators plays a unique and powerful role in our Professional Learning Community, often called a PLC.

Within our Professional Learning Community, each grade level and content area collaborates as a Collaborative Learning Team, or CLT, bringing research, skills, professional development, tools, resources, and a variety of support staff – including our robust Instructional Coaches team and a variety of Special Education professionals and service providers – to bear on our goal: To ensure every single child masters every required skill in a meaningful, authentic way. Our CLTs use a profound array of resources, data, evidence, and professional networks to enhance their skills and help them to target each student's unique learning needs.

Discovery values student learning. The only distinction that is important to a student's learning is whether or not that student has achieved mastery of the skill at hand. If the child hasn't, that child is developing, and we have more work to do together. If the child has mastered the skill, we give opportunities to extend and enhance that skill. Because the way in which each child develops is unique, "ranking" kids or further distinguishing "levels" is counterproductive to learning.

Standards-Based Instruction focuses on what students understand and what they can do with that understanding. This differs from traditional instruction, which is often task-based, leading to teaching based on productivity rather than comprehension and ability.

2-4.benefits of academic standards

Standards provide a focus for reform efforts -- all students must reach them. And teachers can see how well they are doing by looking at their progress towards standards.



Focus is one of the greatest benefits of standards; publication is another. Everyone can see what the schools are aiming to teach and what students must learn. What must be learned isn't a secret, kept for a small portion of the student population and hidden from the rest. Done well, standards can be an important tool for equity: if all kids are required to meet the standards, all schools must work to make children reach them, not just schools which have a majority of middle class, college-bound students.

2-5.How can standards help students to learn better?

Ideally, students learn better in a standards-based environment because everybody's working towards the same goal.

Teachers know what the standards are and choose classroom activities that enable students to achieve the standards.

Students know the standards, too, and can see scoring guides that embody them. The students can use them to complete their work.

Parents know them and can help students by seeing that their homework aligns with the standards.

Administrators know what is necessary to attain the standards and apportion resources and buy materials to ensure that students are able to reach the prescribed standards. Schools communicate the standards to parents via newsletters, etc

2-6.Advantages of Standard Based Grading:

- SBG helps students learn in a more efficient way. It demands higher student proficiency and provides effective methods to help students achieve high standards.



-Standard based grading focuses more on the specific skills a student knows or needs to improve on.

- It allows parents to know exactly how their children are progressing in their education.

-It focuses squarely on the results and helping the local and state educators evaluate which programs and curriculum works best

-It drives instruction and helps teachers differentiate.

2-7. Disadvantages of Standard Based Grading

- standards based report cards were challenging for teachers as they dealt with technical difficulties at the same time they were working to align their teaching and assessment with the new report cards."

- A lot of parents said that there were so many categories in the standard based report card that it was confusing to comprehend ("Rethinking Report Cards").

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As Dr. Wilda's article "The Use of Standard Based Grading is Growing" states that, "vague and unclear standards in several subject areas in several states complicate matters and do not serve as concrete standards defining what students should know and be able to do."

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Parents worry about standard based report card effects on their children with things like the honor roll and class rank.



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The present grading system –A, B, C, D, F– has been ingrained in the school communities, it is what the parents are more used to seeing (Hu)

2–8.Limitation of standards based approach.

Critics of standards tend to fall into three major camps: One group worries that standards will force teachers to "teach to tests" and focus on rote learning rather than on more creative and individualized education. Another group is concerned about where standards are set: too high, and low achievers (particularly in disadvantaged communities) will become discouraged and drop out; too low, and high achievers will not be challenged properly. The third group has no objection to standards per se, but believes that they should be set by local school boards, not by federal or state authorities.

Those who worry about "teaching to tests" express many of the same concerns leveled at standardized testing in general: that it measures test-taking ability rather than real-life skills, that it is biased against students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or that it promotes memorization of facts and interpretations rather than creative thinking. Though these concerns may be valid when related to some of the standardized tests used at benchmark points, standards-based teaching does not only or even primarily rely on such tests. Achievement is also measured by testing skill on writing or other assignments where the teacher and the students decide in advance what type of work is good enough to meet the standard. The students are given examples of such work to view before they do their own work.

Fears about the level of the standards are also common. For example, Richard Rothstein argued recently in THE NEW YORK TIMES (Nov. 10, 1999) that supporters of a common standard for inner-city schools and suburban schools have gone too far in attacking the idea that poor children can't learn. "To counter the earlier myth," he writes, "We have developed a new, equally dangerous one: that social class no longer matters in education and that all children, regardless of



background, can achieve to the same high standards if only schools demand it.... Can we avoid the defeatist myth that schools make no difference, without bouncing to the other extreme, that they make all the difference?" Rothstein and similar critics argue that holding schools with largely poor populations to the same standards as suburban schools is unfair to both: it penalizes the students in the poorer districts for factors beyond their control while not challenging the students in the suburban schools.

On somewhat the same lines, critics worry that holding students to standards -- especially at points where promotion is the issue, such as grades 4 and 8 -- will cause students to become discouraged and drop out of school, especially in heavily minority schools where scores traditionally have not been high. These fears are usually expressed when state assessments based on standards produce low scores the first time out.

Finally, some critics of standards don't object to the idea of standards as public statements of what students should know and be able to do -- they object to who makes those statements. Such critics believe standards should arise locally as community aspirations, rather than be prescribed as national policy. They tend to use words such as "impose" when they describe how standards are adopted. They fear that the federal government will meddle in decisions that should be made on a local level and take the power away from parents and local school boards to decide what children should and should not learn. Some members of the Coalition of Essential Schools 1 take this position.²

2-9. standards based approach in morocco

the teaching of English as a foreign language in Morocco public high school according to the ministry of national education (MNE) is informed by the theoretical framework of standards-based approach (SBA) (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACFL 1996).



English teaching in morocco therefore revolves around the promotion of five goal areas: communication . cultures. connections. Comparisons and communities.these 5C's according to the MNE (2007)implicitly describethe major components of the teaching and learning of english in morocco public high schools they present the overall content standards that any english language learner must strive to meet tograduate from high school. First meeting standards of the goals area of communication enables learners to communicate in spoken and written forms . present information both oral and written and interpret spoken or written messages in away that takes intoaccount the pragmatic and siciolinguistics factors that affect communication. The standards under the goal area if culture. Further help learners to function in culturally appropriate way by deepening their knowledge about the cultural perspective. Practices and products of both local and foreing communities. Moreover culture- related standards enable learners to understand differences and similarities between their own culture and the target culture(s) and instill universal values of tolerance and coexistence within cultural equality.

2-10.ENGLISH LANGUAGE GUIDELINES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: COMMON CORE, FIRST YEAR, AND SECOND YEAR BACCALAUREATE. All Streams and Sections. June 2007

These guidelines are designed for all the secondary school levels; i.e. the common core, the first year and second year baccalaureate. They have been drawn up in accordance with the principles set forth in the National Charter for Education and Training, and subscribe to a standards-based approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language.The guidelines' main aims are:

- to provide further insights into this approach;
- to outline practical tips to further enhance our teaching;



- to stimulate reflection upon ways of maximizing learning and teaching.

The adoption of the standards-based approach suggested in these guidelines can be justified on the following grounds:

- It addresses what learners must know and be able to do with English (content standards) , and of how close they are to achieving the aims of the course (performance standards);
- It addresses communication as being not strictly one skill, but a mixture of the spoken, written, auditory skills;
- It is based on the premise that cultural understanding is essential in language education;
- It connects English with other subjects areas such as history and geography, philosophy, etc;
- It is based on the view that argues that comparing and contrasting our own languages and culture(s) with other languages and culture(s) leads to better understanding of ours;
- It stresses the extension of language learning experiences from the classroom to ‘the outside world’
- It is focused on learner learning(i.e. learner-centered);
- It holds all concerned parties accountable for³ the outcomes of learning;



- It requires performance-based assessment⁴.

With these grounds in view, the teaching of English in Level Four should address five areas:

1. **Communication**----Learners will communicate in both oral and written forms, interpret both oral and written messages, show cultural understanding and present oral and written information to various audiences for a variety of purposes .Three modes of communication are involved here: the *interpersonal*, *interpretive*, and *presentational* communication.

2. **Cultures**----Learners will gain deeper understanding of their culture(s) and other cultures in terms of their **perspectives** (e.g. values, ideas, attitudes, etc.), **practices** (pattern of social interactions), and **products** (e.g. books, laws, music, etc).

3. **Connections**----Learners will make connections with other subject areas; and acquire information and use through English for their own purposes.

4. **Comparisons**----Learners will gain awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences (in terms of both language(s) and culture).

5. **Communities**----Learners will extend their learning experiences from the EFL classroom to the outside world through activities such as the use of the internet .They will therefore be made aware that we live in a global world.

‘Learner training’ for lifelong learning is omnipresent throughout the 5 Cs above. All the curricula and syllabi need to target enabling learners to learn how to learn, and be able to carry on learning by themselves, even when they graduate.



The areas above describe implicitly the overall content of teaching/learning at Level Four. Aligned with these areas are the following types of standards:

- ✓ **Content standards** – are statements about what learners should know and be able to do with English.
- ✓ **Performance standards** – show us how the learners have achieved the standards targeted. They refer to **how learners are meeting a standard** and show the **learner's progress** towards meeting a standard.
- ✓ **Proficiency standards** – these standards tell us **how well** learners should perform.

The necessity for having clear, straightforward and well-articulated standards is self-evident. They provide learners with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and strategies for better English language learning. An effective attainment of these standards requires that teachers should help learners to:

- develop the ability to think through

- Problem-solving;
- informed decision-making;
- systems thinking⁵ (focussing on the whole, not the parts, of a particular issue or system);
- critical, creative, and analytical thinking;⁶
- imagining places, times, and situations different from their own;



- developing and testing hypotheses;
- transferring their English language learning competencies to other learning situations.

- develop communication skills

- constructing and defending an argument;
- working effectively in duos/-groups;
- communicating plans and processes for reaching goals;
- receiving and acting on instructions, plans, and models;
- communicating purposefully using the skills acquired.

- be tuned to quality work

- acquiring and making effective use of information;
- coming up with quality performances(e.g. well-executed presentations/ projects in class);
- revising their performances for later presentations;
- Drawing up and pursuing positive and rewarding goals.

- foster their connections with their community



- being recognizant of their responsibilities and rights as citizens and acting accordingly;
- being willing to work hard and being long-life learners;
- contributing to the aesthetic and cultural life of their community in any way they can;
- viewing themselves and their community within the city/town, country and the world at large;
- contributing and adapting to change – be it scientific or technological.

Teaching through standards: A lesson plan

A lesson that addresses a particular standard should include the following features:

- **Goals and rationale** of the lesson [Succinctly describe the general rationale for teaching your lesson].

- **Focus content area** [Identify the one or two major skills/strategies, language items and knowledge/information which you will target with your lesson].

- **The standard(s) addressed** [Identify the standards which your lesson addresses. Provide a brief rationale explaining how your lesson addresses these standards].

- **Teaching procedures** [Identify the major steps/components of your lesson. Use this step of the lesson to think through and plan the flow of your lesson].



• **Assessment** [How will you determine if your lesson achieved its goals? Include performance indicators in your assessment plan. An assessment plan might look like this:

Performance indicators –

Learners e.g:

- listen attentively and recognize when it is appropriate for them to speak/respond.
- take turns speaking and responding to other people's ideas in conversations on familiar themes.
- recognize the kind of interaction appropriate for different circumstances such as pair/group-work and debates.
- use appropriate conversation skills.

Sample tasks –

This is evident, for example, when learners:

- take part in pair/group-work ,debates, etc.;
- invite English-speaking visitors to their school or classroom and respond to their questions;
- use a communication device to greet a classmate or deliver a message to another speaker of English;



- write an e-mail message or a text message to a friend;
- are involved in follow-up activities and tasks (e.g. mini-projects).⁷

The standards-based approach suggested in these guidelines sets relatively high expectations with regard to the teaching of the skills of **reading**, **writing**, **speaking**, and **listening**. We should work towards creating the conditions necessary for all learners to meet the desired outcomes. For the teaching of these skills to be successful, teachers and textbook designers should have the five standards areas (i.e. communications, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities) referred to earlier in mind. These skills (i.e. literacy) need to be addressed earlier with a view to helping learners (i) meet the standards set forth for all levels and (ii) help learner gradually develop their communicative competence. This encompasses:

- **Grammatical competence:** the mastery of the language code itself.
- **Socio-cultural competence:** the ability to understand and use utterances appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors/ clues.
- **Discourse competence:** the ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified or coherent spoken or written text in different genres.
- **Strategic competence:** The ability to make use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (a) to make up for breakdowns in communication and (b) to boost the effectiveness of communication⁸.

Speaking Content Standards



Standards for the teaching of speaking in the second year Baccalaureate (See syllabi⁹) ; for instance, should be conceived of as inter-related and hence be approached in a recursive way to ensure adequate attainment.

- **Speaking content standard 1:** learners will be able to effectively speak in different situations for a variety of purposes and with a variety of audiences ;
- **Speaking content standard 2:** learners will be able to convey messages and make use of a range of skills and strategies to speak effectively, using their current proficiency to the fullest;
- **Speaking content standard 3:** learners will be able to evaluate information by recognizing the interlocutor's purpose, to draw conclusions or make informed decisions to interact with the interlocutor effectively;
- **Speaking content standard 4:** learners will be able to speak with their interlocutors in a culturally appropriate way.

Speaking performance standards

Inherent in the achievement of these standards is a series of processes and strategies learners are to be engaged with to make the speaking act successful:

- Identify and use spoken discourse appropriate to purpose and audience.
- prepare and deliver information by generating topics, organizing ideas, facts or opinions for a variety of speaking purposes and audiences (e.g. relating experiences, telling a story or presenting a report).



- use main ideas (or thesis statements) and supporting details to organize and communicate information.
- participate in group discussions using appropriate language functions; predict, clarify, analyze, interpret, ask and respond to questions.
- plan logical steps and organize resources to carry out a task within a given time frame (e.g. collecting information for a presentation; giving and following multiple-step directions).
- evaluate responses both as interviewers and interviewees.
- Be aware of and identify cross-cultural similarities and differences.
- use effective and appropriate vocabulary and logical connectors to relate or summarize ideas, events and other information.
- Express personal feelings and emotions (anger, happiness, doubt, surprise, etc.)
- Respond to direct questions, instructions, suggestions, offers, visual input, etc.
- Use supra-segmental features (intonation, stress, and rhythm) accurately.

In oral communication, speakers usually choose (i) a topic, (ii) the type of organization required, and (iii) the appropriate language to express ideas, feelings, transmit information, etc. They also choose (iv) the delivery techniques appropriate to the audience and the situation¹⁰. These strategies are often used simultaneously.



Therefore, learners should be trained to use them adequately in oral communication.

Helping learners meet the speaking standards

Setting appropriate pedagogy for the teaching of speaking in the Moroccan context requires teachers to be aware of the differences between spoken and written discourse, and then build on them to design purposeful tasks and activities. From the point of view of production, it is self-evident that spoken and written discourse makes somewhat different demands on speakers and writers. The speaker, for instance, functions under the pressure of time, whereas the writer does not need to monitor, repair or modify her/ his output immediately. The speaker may also have access to immediate feedback from the interlocutor(s), while the writer can only imagine the reaction of his audience.¹¹

Role plays and simulations

Learners should be given opportunities to work cooperatively to complete a task, draw up a project, develop a plan, or talk about an issue from different perspectives. They should also be encouraged to play life-like roles. Role-plays and simulations contribute a lot to learners' developing their repertoire of functions and vocabulary¹². They also expose them to more input on issues of formality/informality, register, culture and many other aspects of communication. They have to use language that is accurate and appropriate to the situation.

Learners generally find role playing enjoyable, but those who lack self-confidence or have a lower level of proficiency may find them inhibiting at first. With the teacher's help, peers' tolerance and care, and with a lot of practice (individually, in pairs or in groups), these learners may develop over time.

Discussions, debates and conversations



Learners work together in groups of four or five on a controversial issue in order to reach a consensus or come to a decision. They may be, for example, provided with a set of CVs and letters of people applying for a job (e.g. a secretary). They have to go through these CVs and letters, talk together about them, and make a decision as who best suits the position. They then have to talk to their peers and defend their choice. Learners may also be asked to discuss a topic or converse on the basis of certain guidelines or questions. Essential is their ability to introduce themselves, agree, disagree on a point, bridge information gaps, etc. These two activities –and similar ones– help teachers hand over some responsibility to learners; a premise for learner autonomy.

Short presentations and oral reports

These speaking modes might be prepared or unprepared. Learners are asked, individually or in groups, to give an oral presentation on a specific topic (5 to 10 minutes). Learners should be encouraged to speak from their notes. The teacher may help learners with guidelines as to how to start their talk, list facts, express opinions, and close their talk or summarize the most important ideas of the talk. Learners should also be equipped with appropriate strategies for dealing with peers' questions.

Other speaking activities

Some of the activities mentioned above might be provided in the textbook, but others can be designed by teachers themselves to respond to learners' needs and relate these activities to the learners' background knowledge and learning context. Other types of communicative activities might include:

- presentation of projects;
- discussion of fact sheets;



- acting out a scene from daily life, short plays, or sketches;
- discussing or acting out a video – or audio–taped extract;
- picture–cued story telling;
- picture and/ or sound description, interpretation, and extension, and
- games.

2-2 soft skills

2-2-1 definition of softskills

We define soft skills as intra– and inter–personal (socio–emotional) skills , essential for personal development, social participation and workplace success.they unclude skills such as communication, ability to work on multidisciplinary teams, adaptability etc.these skills should be distinguished from technical, or “ hard skills”.¹³

Soft skills are abilities that relate to how you work and how you interact with other people. Popular soft skills include communication, teamwork and other interpersonal skills. Employers look for soft skills in candidates because these skills are hard to teach and are important for long–term success.

Other names for soft skills: personal skills, interpersonal skills, non–technical skills ,essential skills, transferable skills .

2-2-2.The importansce of soft skills



Soft skills play an important role in resume writing, interviewing, job performance and finding success in communicating with people at work and in other areas of your life

For example, as you look for jobs, you may find that many employers list specific soft skills on their job posts in the “required” or “desired” sections.

For example, a job posting for a human resources associate may list “attention to detail” as a desired trait, while a job for a marketing specialist could list “leadership” and “great communication skills” as required traits.

Soft skills are often transferable across careers and industries. As a result, you may find that you possess many of the required traits even if you don’t match the exact profile in a job description. As you search for jobs, pay special attention to posts calling for candidates with soft skills or traits you possess

Even if the job title isn’t a great fit, you may find that the description makes sense for you. As you progress through the job search process, keep your resume updated to reflect soft skills most relevant to the jobs you’re applying for.

While having your soft skills on your resume can catch the attention of an employer, the interview is where you’ll be able to showcase that you actually possess these skills. While you can display some skills like good communication, you may consider weaving others into your answers to interview questions.

Soft skills are the secret sauce that allows people to progress in their careers. Many people suffer from the limiting belief that they can’t learn soft skills such as better communication or time management, creativity or problem-solving. But this isn’t true. The good news is that soft skills can be learned, and your teams will be more productive and efficient if they do. Whether it’s a new hire in the organization, or a manager looking to advance to the next level in their careers, soft skills are what they need to learn to get ahead.

Soft skills are life skills that help a person adjust to the demands of the workplace, adapt to shifting relationships with team members and customers and



thrive in a competitive and fast-paced environment. These skills include communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, leadership or problem-solving. Soft skills benefit business leaders in a variety of ways.

To become a soft skills master, you'll first have to understand the meaning of soft skills and the role they play in our lives at work and with teams. Also, it's important to understand how lacking soft skills can lead to an atmosphere of fear and blame that prevents people from being their best.

2-2-3 . Hard Skills Versus Soft Skills

- Hard skills, as opposed to soft skills, are the types of skills that students routinely get taught in school. These are skills that are easily quantifiable. For instance, when a student performs well in school, they receive high marks for grades and, eventually, are awarded a degree demonstrating that they've attained a certain level of mastery in those skills. It's easy to check the degree of mastery over these skills because grades can easily be looked up.

- Soft skills are a lot harder to quantify. While you can hand out certificates for skills, like leadership, how do you actually quantify leadership? A grade of 90 in math can represent that a student scored nine out of ten questions right, and those questions can easily be checked and verified. Quantifying and verifying these subjects is easy. Soft skills cannot be quantified and verified with the same ease. However, soft skills are still incredibly important, and schools still need to communicate these topics to students.

- When students move beyond school and move into their careers, they'll list their soft skills the same as they list their soft skills. Hard skills might be listed, such as data analysis or mathematics. Someone applying for a job can point to their degree in these areas, which suggest they made sufficient grades in these areas. However, students will also list soft skills like "detail-oriented" or "leadership." Since hiring managers look at both hard and soft skills, it's important for activities to be developed that teach both. Since most students will never find the opportunity to take a class that specializes in teamwork, for



example, it falls to teachers to integrate the instruction of soft skills into their existing courses.

- Examples of Soft Skills

- So, what are some soft skills and how are they used? Every job will prioritize different soft skills, but here are some of the skills that are most frequently identified as necessary in the workforce. Many times, these broad soft skills encompass smaller skills, such that many smaller skills help prepare a student to be successful in broad categories such as teamwork or communication

Communication Skills

Communication skills are important because even if someone is highly skilled in their field, they still need to help their organization succeed. It doesn't matter how well they perform their individual job if they can't communicate what they're doing to others. When communication breaks down, people get confused about what has been done, what needs to be done, and when things are due. This can lead to projects failing as communication comes to a halt.

Effective communication requires individuals to be strong listeners as well as communicators. They need to be able to understand where others stand with regards to finishing a project. Good communicators listen and respond, ensuring that everyone on a team has a solid understanding of work that still needs to be done

Creativity

One of the most underrated skills for people to possess is the skill of creativity. People get accustomed to working according to certain rules and routines. While this is sufficient for dealing with most work issues from one day to another, you also need to be able to develop innovative solutions when novel problems arise. Creative individuals are able to work within the limits of their organization in such a way that they conceive new approaches that help improve the way their organization responds to arising issues.



Those with a solid sense of creativity are innovative problem solvers. They have an ability to understand the problems in front of them and the solutions that have previously been used. With an understanding of the issue and previous responses, creative individuals assess what resources are available and develop new approaches to solving the problems within their organization.

Adaptability

A skill that any student will use from school through their career will be the ability to adapt to any given situation. One of the purposes of schools is to get students used to the routine of a day's work, since for most people, a career will ask them to work on a regular schedule accorded to set hours. It's easy for students to get used to the structure and routine of a normal day's work.

However, they also need to be able to adapt in the face of novel circumstances . When sudden change occurs, or unanticipated problems arise, it can leave some students unable to effectively respond. As students learn to be more adaptable, they become better situated to respond to a wide range of problems. A student who learns how to adapt quickly to changing school conditions is better suited to responding in the workplace when new problems arise

Public speaking

Public speaking stands apart from general communication skills specifically because publicly speaking requires its own unique set of communication skills. When talking in front of others, people need to be able to speak confidently, be clear in their messaging, and use solid logic in their presentation while under the additional pressure of being watched by others.

An effective public speaker understands their audience and how to speak to them. For instance, if speaking to a highly technical audience, they use the lingo that the audience understands. This language can be technical to match the audience



and focus on processes that were developed to solve organizational issues. However, for a business-oriented audience, they may need to use less technical language and focus more tightly on what solutions were developed and how they benefited the organization.

Team work

The nature of the classroom lends itself to helping develop the soft skill of teamwork. Teamwork requires that students interact with one another toward completing a singular goal. This is something that they'll often face in the workplace as they're asked to work toward resolving organizational issues or as they work with others to meet goals set by their employers. Effective teamwork draws together a number of other skills, like communication skills and interpersonal skills, and puts them to use so that these goals can be met.

Part of teamwork also involves understanding the hierarchy of the group. Some people have an assertive leadership style and may feel comfortable organizing how the group will meet their goals. Others might be passive individuals who would prefer to remain in the background and focus on technical details of the project. Regardless of their own personal styles, individuals who learn teamwork skills learn how to use their personal styles for the good of their group rather than for their own good at the expense of the group .¹⁴

EXAMPLES OF HARD SKILLS

- Bilingual or multilingual
- Database management
- Adobe software suite
- Network security
- SEO/SEM marketing
- Data mining
- Mobile development



- User interface design
- Marketing campaign management

2-2-4 .Teaching soft skills :

For VET and university students the places of soft skills training can be the classroom or the workplace .classroom training is essential during their studies in the relevant educational institutions,before they actually enter the workplace and in context of lifelong learning .

Classroom training

Learning theories

The most widely used learning theories in competency are :

- Experiential education theory
- Social cognitive theory

Experiential education(association for experiential education : acommunityof progressive educator and practitioner) suggests tha people are unspired to learn(or do something differently or change) by an exxperience of their own or rerhaps by observing someone else's experience. Experiential learning can be used in some industry sectors , for example , to allow training participants to feel directly what it is like to be the client for a hairdresser or to be an elderly care home client for a day .

Social cognitive learning (bandura ,2011) for example ,role modelling,observing and imitation, is used,especially by young children and adolescents,and is the basis of the mentoring or coaching strategies. The information gathered from the experience,or observation of other people's experience,only becomes a learning experience once there is an opportunity to reflect on it, relate it to some theorecal concepts and apply it.

Apart from the learning theory in use, another factor that determines the outcomes is the consideration of students' different learning style. Kolb (1989) developed a learnig style model to classify the way students take information in and how they internalise information.

Some people can start with the theory (abstract concept) and apply it in their own life.



Others prefer to start with an activity (concrete experience). To some it only becomes clear through a discussion with others or reviewing it themselves (reflective observation) and to others it is clarified when they engage in active experimentation. Kolb concludes that the point at which the learning becomes interesting reflects a preferred learning style. However, the learning process is not complete until it has passed through the whole cycle (experience- reflection- concepts- doing- new experience). In order for a course to be efficient, it should consider the different learning styles of the students. ¹⁵

- How to improve soft skills

Here are several ways you can improve your soft skills :

1. Pick a skill you want to improve and practice it consistently

You can improve any soft skill if you make it a practice. Most soft skills are a matter of routine. For example, you can practice dependability both on the job and at home by improving punctuality (showing up to work or events on time or early, for example) and starting on projects at work earlier so you can complete them ahead of schedule.

2. Observe and mimic the positive soft skills you see in others

There are likely professionals you know or work with who have strengths in various soft skills. You may be able to develop integral soft skills by observing the practices of others and incorporating them into your own daily routine.

You may find, for example, that effective communicators often write down notes when others are talking during meetings. Quite often, this helps them organize their thoughts so they are prepared to ask and answer important questions. This is also an active listening practice that may be good to utilize as part of your own work.



3. Set milestone goals to improve soft skills

Set specific, measurable goals by carefully reading your performance reviews at work or asking trusted friends and colleagues for constructive criticism. This can help you to both identify key areas of improvement for goal setting and areas of strength to highlight on your resume and in interviews. You can prioritize which soft skills to work on based on those that you need to get a certain job or move up in a career you already have.

4. Find resources to help you learn

There are a variety of resources such as books, podcasts or online classes that can help you learn tactics for improving specific soft skills. While some require payment, many are free and accessible at any time. You might try a few different resources to see which are best for your learning style

Many employers value strong soft skills over technical skills because they are often personality traits developed over a lifetime and can be difficult to teach. That being said, anyone can improve their soft skills with experience and practice.

For example, you may find that an employer is seeking someone skilled in conflict

resolution. While you may be naturally skilled at effective communication, it may help to practice working through conflicts with others. When looking through job postings make note of what soft skills are showing up consistently in your vertical as a guide for which skills you may need to develop.¹⁶



3.Methodology

3-1 Participants

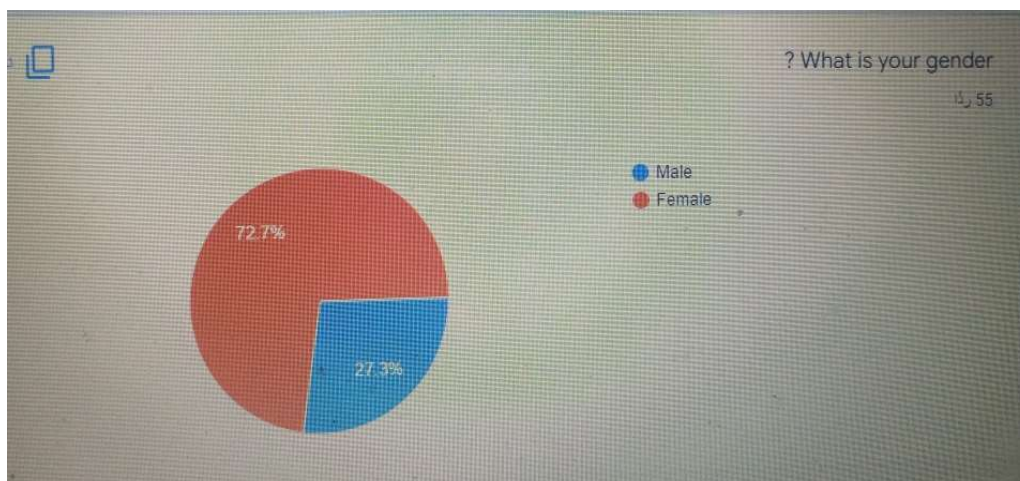
The participants in this study are teachers of secondary and middle school level of different schools in morocco . The reason behind choosing secondary and middle school level is that they are considered as a suitable category for gathering credible information. Since, they are advance in level, and they are more aware of their methods of teaching SOFT skills.

3-2 form result

In data collecting, a questionnaire was sent to 55 english teacher. The main aims of data collection are to have a transparent idea about role of standards based approach in teaching soft skills .Moreover , to know the best teaching approach of developing soft skills and to what extent are the soft skills important in students life.

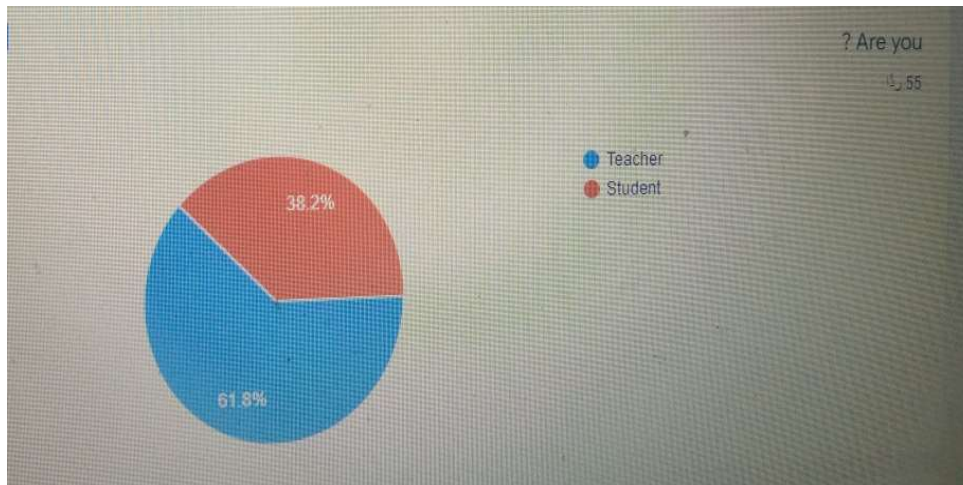
The results of the questions :

Question 1 : what is your gender

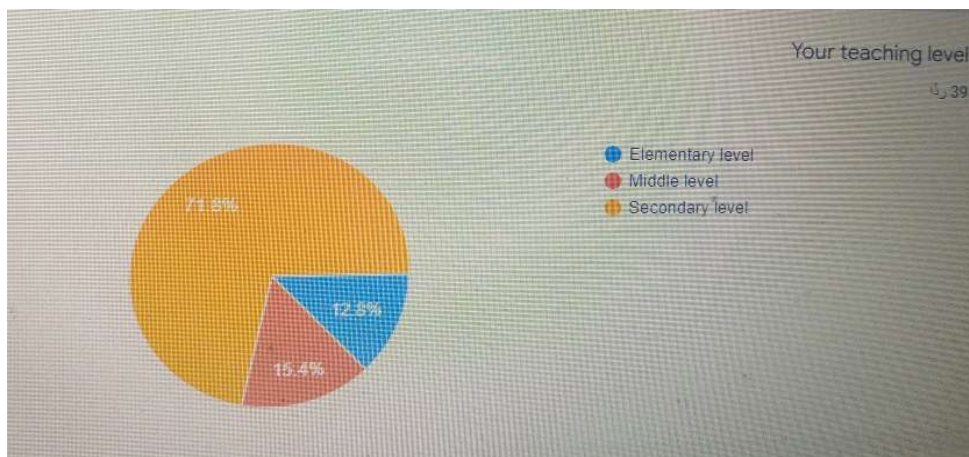




Question 2: Are you ?

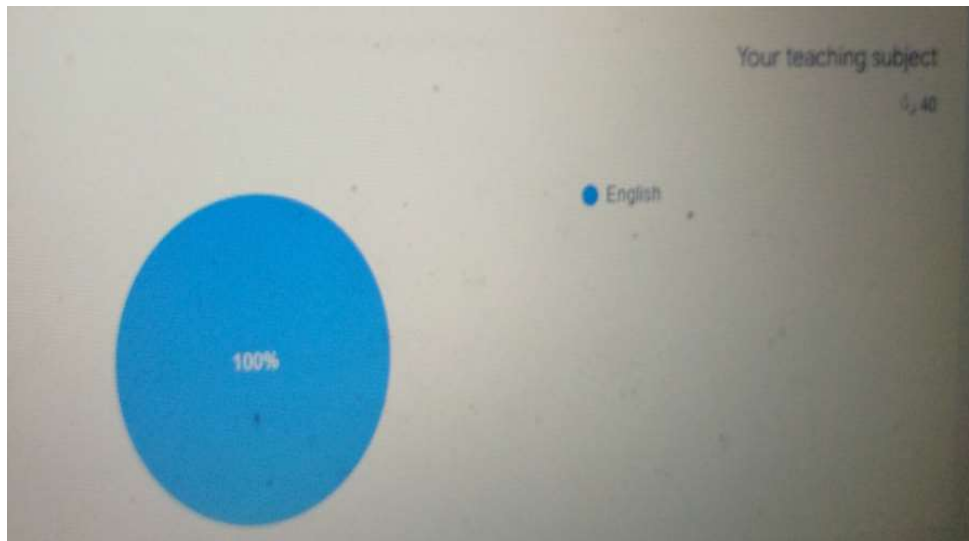


Question 3 : your teaching level ?

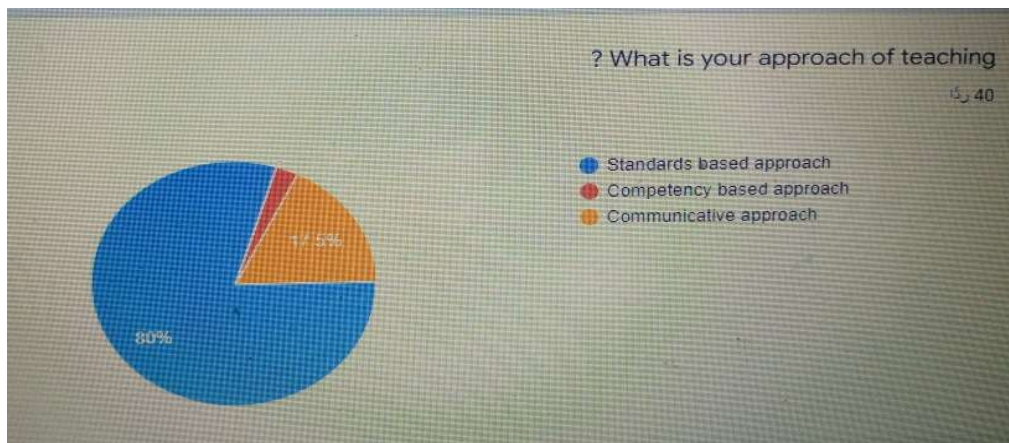




Question 4 : Your teaching subject ?



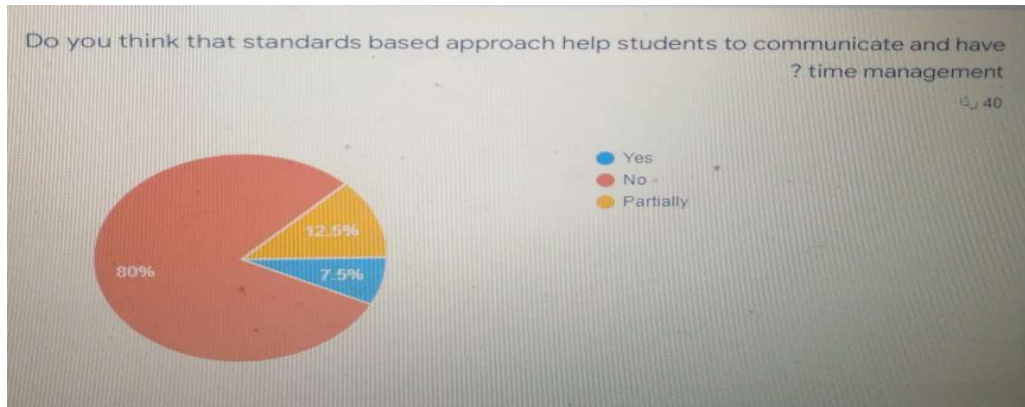
Question5 : what is your approach of teaching ?





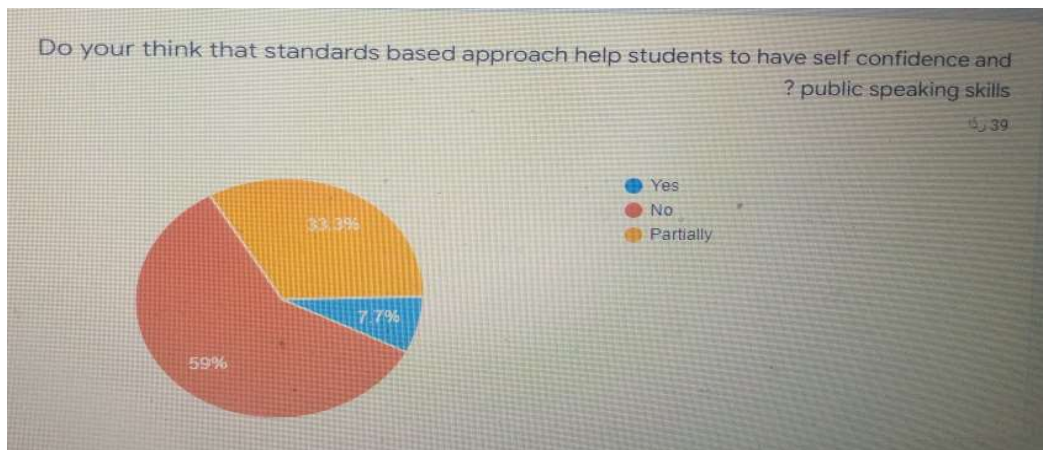
Question 6 : do you think that standard based approach help students to communicate

And have time management ?



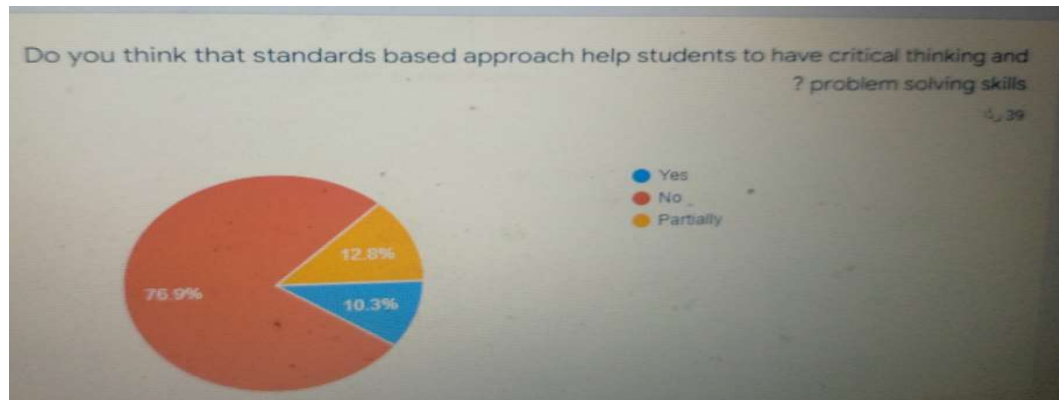
Question7 : do you think that standard based approach help students to have self

Confidence and public speaking skills ?





Question 8 : do you think that standard based approach help students to have critical thinking and problem solving skills ?



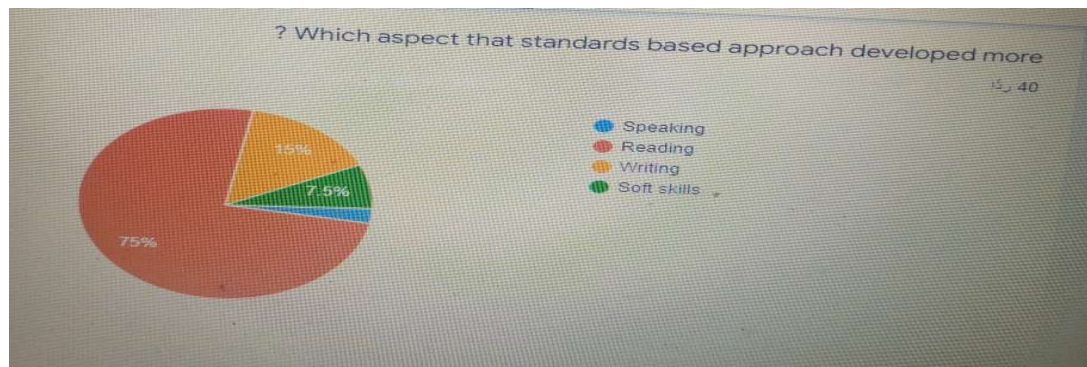
Question 9 : do you think that standard based approach prepared students better to deal

With unexpected situation at class and outside class ?

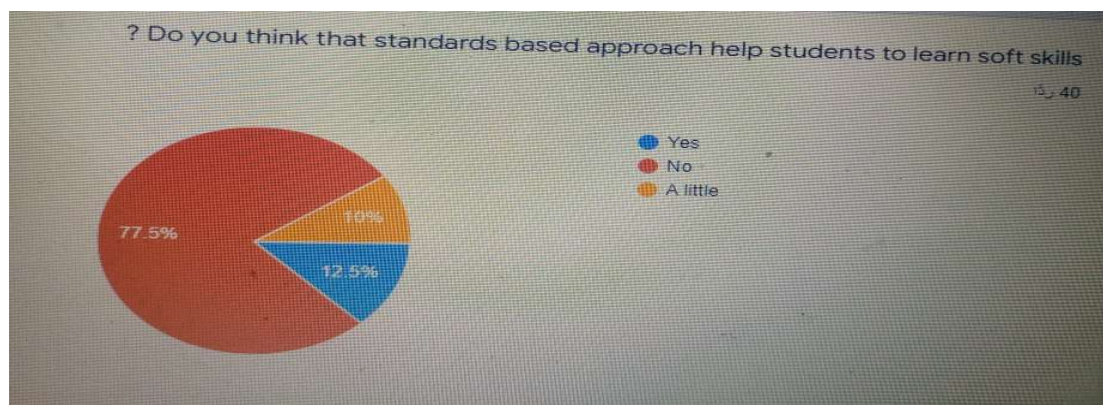




Question 10 : which aspect that standards based approach developed more ?



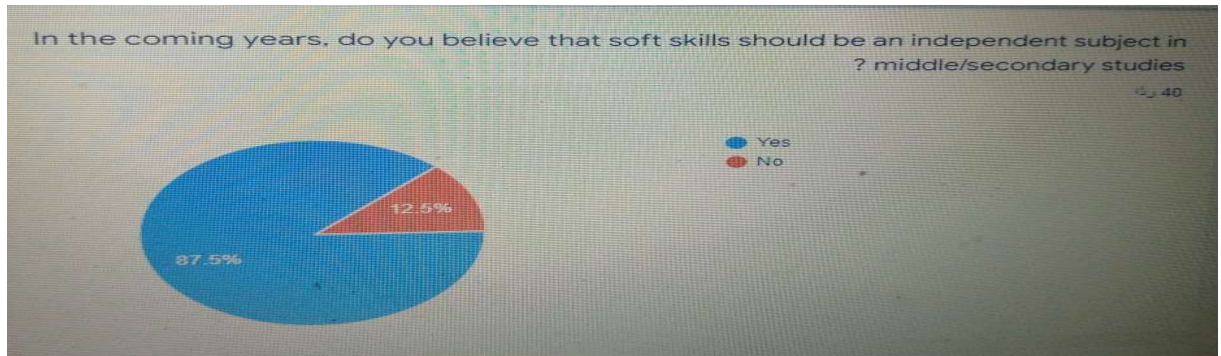
Question 11 : do you think that standard based approach help student to learn soft skills ?





Question12 : in the coming year do you believe that soft skills should be an independent subject

In middle and secondary studies ?

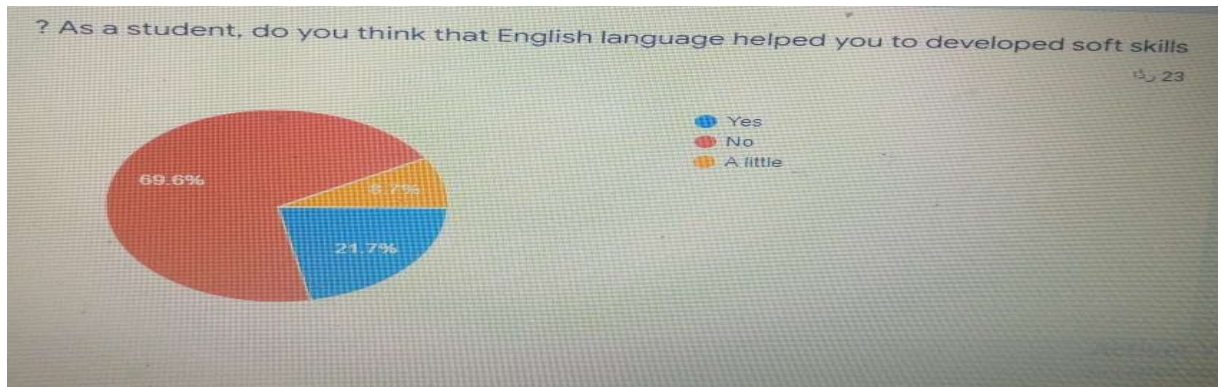


Question13 : which approach do you think can help students developing soft skills ?





Question14 :as a student do you think tha english langage helped you to developed soft skills ?



3-2 .analysis and discussion

The results presented in the questionnaire.All of the questions indicated different answers.

Question1 :

Concerning the first question which is about the gender of the interrogated ; it show that the majority of them are women ,and this is a normal result because most of those who work in education are women.

Question2 : this question show that teacher who are answer this question ; because they are the ones concerned with applying standards based approach .

Question3 : This question is for the goal of knowing the level in which standards based approach applied more ; according to the result shown in the graph standards based approach used more in the secondary schools, because english don't learned in some elementary and middle morrocan schools.



Question4 : The reason of asking such a question is to know in which subject this approach is applied ; and as shown in the graph only teachers of english who use it.

Question5 : The findings in questionnaire show that the majority of teachers use standards based approach in their teaching ; and this is due to the curriculum that requires them to apply this approach.

Question6 : The following question is asked to see the role of standards based approach in development of communication and time management ; : The findings show that the majority of teachers confirmed that standards based approach don't help students to communicate and have time management.

Question 7 : This question seeks to know the role of standards based approach in development of self confidence and public speaking skills ; The findings in questionnaire item 7 show that the majority of teachers said that standards based approach don't help students to have self confidence and public speaking skills.

Question 8 : The reason behind asking this question is to see to what extent does standards based approach help in teaching students critical thinking and problem solving skills ; and it appears from The findings show that most of teachers confirmed that standards based approach don't help students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills .

Question 9 : The question is for the sake of knowing if standards based approach prepared students to deal with unexpected situation at class and outsid class ; The findings in questionnaire item 9 show that the majority of teachers confirmed that standards based approach don't help students to to deal with unexpected situation at class and outsid class

Question 10 : The reason behind this question is to know which aspect that standards based approach developed more ; According to the findings of the



questionnaire item 10 standards based approach developed just reading and writing and does not contribute to the development of speaking and soft skills.

Question 11 : The aim behind this question is to know clearly the role of standards based approach in development of soft skills ; The outcomes of the questionnaire item 11 suggest that standards based approach does not help students to develop their soft skills .

Question 12 : This question is raised for the purpose of discovering out if teachers and student with the idea of making soft skills an independent subject in middle and secondary studies ; the result of the questionnaire show that the majority of if teachers and student with the idea of making soft skills as an independent subject.

Question 13 : The last question seeks to discover the appropriate approach that can helps students developing soft skills ; According to the findings of the questionnaire item13, it seems that the majority of teachers agree that the communicative approach is the most appropriate approach to developing soft skills.

Question 14 : this question is directed to students to find out whether the english langage helped them to aquire soft skills ;The findings of the questionnaire item show that the english langage in middle and secondary studies did not help students to aquire soft skills

3-3.Findings

- standards based approach used more in the secondary schools .
- the majority of teachers use standards based approach in their teaching ; and this is due to the curriculum that requires them to apply this approach.
- standards based approach don't help students to communicate and have time management.



- that standards based approach don't help students to have self confidence and public speaking skills.
 - standards based approach don't help students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills
 - that standards based approach don't help students to to deal with unexpected situation at class and outsid class .
 - standards based approach developed just reading and writing, and does not contribute to the development of speaking and soft skills.
 - standards based approach is ineffective in teaching soft skills
 - Learning soft skills is important for student at the personal level , the social level and the professional level
 - the communicative approach is the most appropriate approach for teaching soft skill .
 - the english langage in middle and secondary studies did not help students to aquire soft skills
- the majority of teachers and students with the idea of making soft skills as an independent subject.

3-4.Recommendations

our Recommendations for better soft skills teaching in secondary and middle level education are :

- Incorporate soft skills into the curriculum
- Measures to be under taken by secondary schools for effective soft skills development are : increase intership opportunities.
- Organize seminars/ conferences/round tables about soft skills for students during their study in secondary schools.
- The most suitable environment to learn soft skills schools or specialized centres.



- Integrate soft skills in the training of novice teachers such as communication, creative thinking , problem solving, and team work really support them in providing effective strategies and technique to transmitte soft skills effectively to their students.
- Giving more importance to soft skills , because Learning soft skills help students to choise the suitable speciality and enhances of them in getting a job.
- making soft skills as an independent subject in schools.

NOTES:

¹<https://www.edglossary.org/standards-based/>

² Internet resources.

³Accountability is an integral part in the approach suggested. All stakeholders are accountable to each other for the expected learning outcomes.

⁴See the Fourth Part of these guidelines.

⁵ Systems thinking is a way of understanding reality that emphasizes the relationships among the system's parts, rather than the parts themselves.

⁶ This is a strategy that fosters the learner's ability to think *methodically*. Learners should be encouraged to think both critically and analytically.

⁷ENGLISH LANGUAGE GUIDELINES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: COMMON CORE, FIRST YEAR, AND SECOND YEAR BACCALAUREATE All Streams and Sections 2007.

⁸(See Canale and Swain 1980, and Canale, 1982).

⁹ See Appendix F

¹⁰ The situation includes participants and their relationship, the place of the speaking act, etc.

¹¹ For more details and examples, see Gillian Brown and George Yule, 1983.

¹² Two sections are devoted to the teaching of vocabulary and functions respectively in these guidelines.

¹³ Teaching and assessung soft skills , k kechagias (ed), mass project ,september 2011 .p 33.

¹⁴ Artical written by becton loveless on the site

<https://www.educationcorner.com/teaching-soft-skills-guide.html>

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¹⁵ See teaching and assessing soft skills, K Kechagia (ED), mass project september 2011.p 59.

¹⁶ Articale written by By Indeed Editorial Teamdecember 8 ,2021 on the internet .