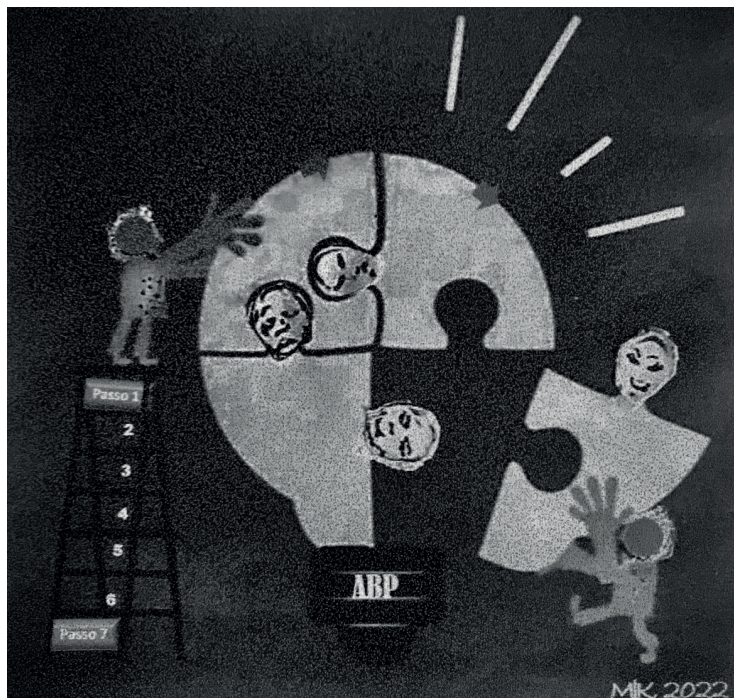




Social Skills Handbook for Problem-Based Learning Tutorial Groups

**Daniela Costa de Oliveira Santos e
Claudia Maria Costa de Oliveira (Orgs)**



Social Skills Handbook for Problem-Based Learning Tutorial Groups

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Christus University Center

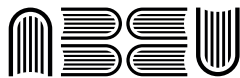
**Fortaleza
2023**

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Publisher of Christus University Center
R. João Adolfo Gurgel, 133 – Cocó – Fortaleza – Ceará
CEP: 60190 – 180 – Tel.: (85) 3265-8100
Website: <https://unichristus.edu.br/editora/>
E-mail: editora01@unichristus.edu.br

Publisher affiliated to



Associação Brasileira
das Editoras Universitárias

Reviewer

Elzenir Coelho da Silva Rolim

Translator

Priscilla Santos

Book Cover

Marcos Kubrusly

Visual Programming and Graphic Publishing
Jefferson Silva Ferreira Mesquita

Catalog Sheet

Antônia Karine Paz Brito - Bibliotecária – CRB 3/1727

S678 Social skills handbook for problem-based learning tutorial groups [recurso eletrônico] / Daniela Costa de Oliveira Santos, Claudia Maria Costa de Oliveira, organizadores. – Fortaleza: EdUnichristus, 2023.

99 p.: il.

16,81 MB; E-book PDF.

Título original: Manual de Habilidades Sociais para Grupos Tutoriais da Aprendizagem Baseada em Problemas.

ISBN 978-65-89839-37-8

1. Social skills. 2. Problem-based learning. 3. Tutorial Groups. I. Título.

CDD 370.1523

CHRISTUS UNIVERSITY CENTER

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FOREWORD

The Social Skills Handbook for Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Tutorial Groups is a dissertation product of the Master's in Teaching in Health and Educational Technologies - MESTed.

The present tool was designed to spread the knowledge of the topic of Social Skills in PBL to tutors and students to improve tutor-student interaction and the teaching-learning process in PBL and introduce the concept of Social Skills Training.

This manual also provides essential information that can lead to greater satisfaction for tutors and students and better academic performance. We hope that this manual will be helpful in the journey of the construction of knowledge. Enjoy your reading!

Daniela Costa de Oliveira Santos

Claudia Maria Costa de Oliveira

About the Authors

Daniela Costa de Oliveira Santos is a physician from the Federal University of Ceará (UFC) with a residency in Pediatrics and Neonatology at Hospital Infantil Albert Sabin (HIAS), a master's student in Teaching in Health and Educational Technologies (MESTed) at Christus University Center, and a tutor in PBL at Christus University Center, Fortaleza-Ceará.

Claudia Maria Costa de Oliveira is a nephrologist physician from the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), a Ph.D. in Health Sciences from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, professor at the Christus University Center, where she also acts as advisor of the Professional Master's in Teaching in Health and Educational Technologies (MESTed) of the Christus University Center.

Marcos Kubrusly is a nephrologist physician from the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), Ph.D. (Université Paris Descartes), and professor at Christus University Center. He is active in the field of nephrology and medical education. Currently, he is the coordinator of Active Methodologies Learning, advisor of the Professional Master in Teaching in Health and Educational Technologies (MESTed), and Pro-Rector of Research and Graduate Studies of the Christus University Center, Fortaleza-Ceará.

Yasmim Berni Ferreira is a medical student at the Centro Universitário Christus, Fortaleza-Ceará. She is enrolled in one of the Special Interest Groups at Unichristus. Her area of interest is general surgery and medical education.

João Pedro Inácio dos Reis is a medical student at the Centro Universitário Christus, Fortaleza-Ceará. He is enrolled in one of the Special Interest Groups at Unichristus.

Jéssica Barbosa de Sá Cavalcante Cidrão is a psychologist from the University of Fortaleza (UNIFOR) and a medical student at the Christus University Center, Fortaleza-Ceará. She is enrolled in one of the Special Interest Groups at Unichristus.

Thanks to **Louyse Teixeira de Souza Freitas**, a nurse at Christus University Center, resident in the Multiprofessional Integrated Residency in Hospital Health Care with a concentration area in transplants at the Federal University of Ceará, for her participation in some of the illustrations in this manual.

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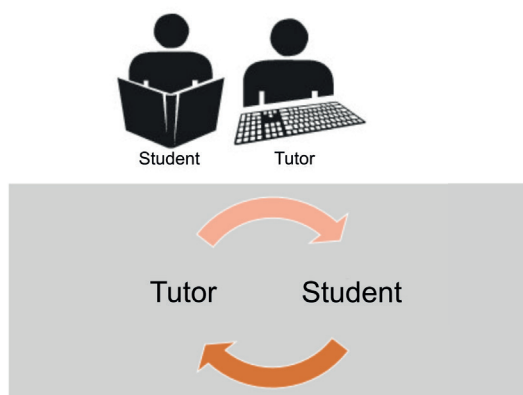
PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Yasmim Berni, Jessica Cidrão, João Pedro Reis, Marcos Kubrusly, Daniela Santos

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a method that presents its main characteristics: it is student-centered, develops in small groups, presents problems in a clinical context, and is an active, cooperative, integrated, interdisciplinary, and adult-oriented teaching-learning process. For the methodology to be successful, it is necessary to focus on the student's cognitive process, prior knowledge of the content discussed, and the interpersonal skills of the group, which are fundamental for motivation and knowledge acquisition.

PBL is a teaching method in which the student leaves the position of mere receiver of information and begins to build his knowledge through active search. In the same way, the teacher becomes the tutor, where, instead of spreading his understanding about a particular subject, he is only a facilitator and helper in the search for knowledge (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Students actively search for knowledge and the tutor as a facilitator in the search for knowledge in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

PBL was initially developed in 1969 at McMaster University in Canada and quickly spread to other universities worldwide. In Brazil, it has been implemented since 1997.

In PBL, knowledge is constituted by knowledge and experiences that are dynamically intertwined. Students and tutors have their own experiences, which are used in the process. The tutor has a synthetic view of the contents, and the students have a syncretic view, which makes the experience a central point in the formation of knowledge, more so than formal content.

This is essentially collaborative learning, as is the production of knowledge.

Differences between traditional methodology and active methodology

Currently, the traditional study is still the primary method used in Brazil, but what is this methodology based on?

When we analyze the traditional pedagogical practice, the basis of this teaching is the **content** transmitted by the **teacher** in a classroom with **dozens of students** through **expository lessons** guided by a didactic script, where students, after the content is passed on, must **read and study**, often **memorizing** the content, to finally take a multiple choice or written test on the “acquired knowledge,” thus making the teaching decorative and fragmented..

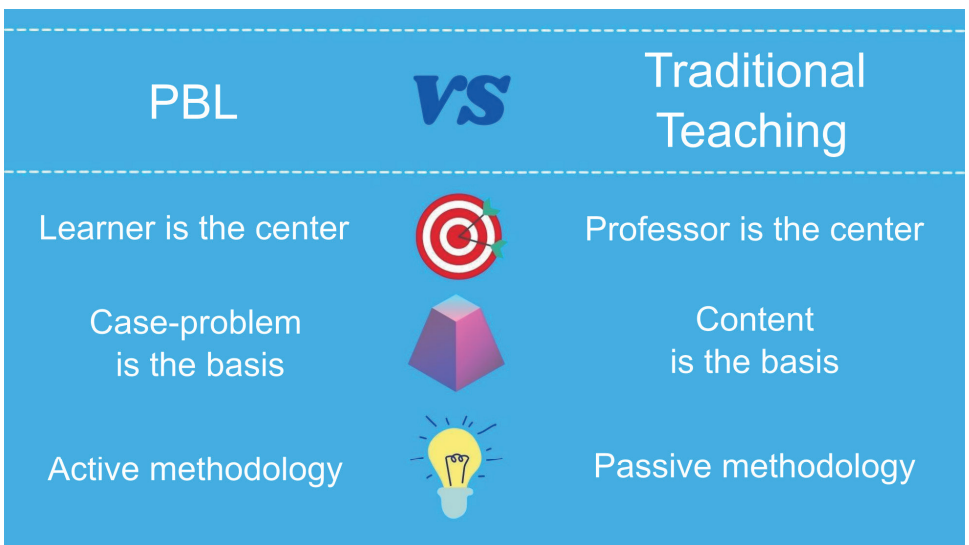
The traditional study generates learning focused on the **theoretical context**, which stimulates memorization as a tool, which, associated with other skills, can become positive for student learning.

Given this, it can be seen that PBL is the opposite of the traditional model because the **student** becomes the **center of learning**, and the **case problem** becomes the **basis of the methodology**. The student, together with his tutorial group

(with 8-11 students), will seek to **understand** the case through prior knowledge, discussions, reflections, and active search for knowledge, thus favoring diversity of thought and a more solid transdisciplinary knowledge (Figure 2).

With this, the student will be able to apply the knowledge in their professional practice better, **develop social skills and** critical thinking, and foster the need for lifelong learning through the active pursuit of knowledge.

Figure 2. PBL versus traditional teaching



Source: Authors-generated material.

The advantages and disadvantages of active methods over traditional methods are described (Table 1):

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of the active and traditional methods.

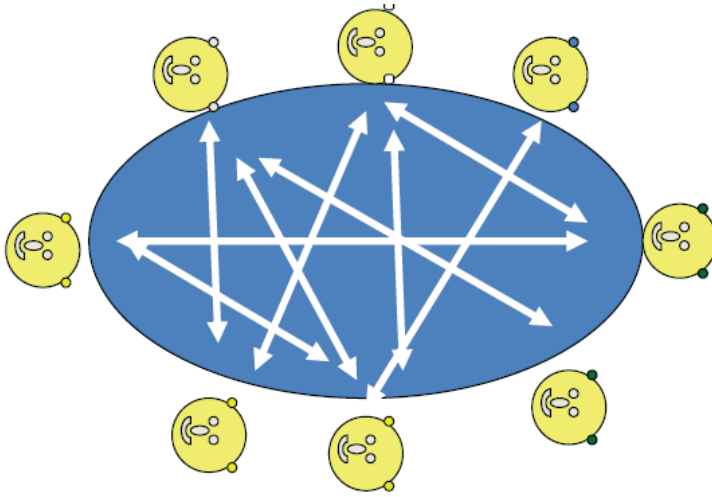
	Traditional Teaching method	Active Methodologies
Advantages	<p>Work with large groups.</p> <p>Little teaching work.</p> <p>Low cost.</p> <p>It covers all the content to be acquired on a topic.</p>	<p>He works with small groups.</p> <p>It individualizes to the needs of the students.</p> <p>It facilitates student-teacher interaction.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Evaluation is restricted to poorly discriminative methods.</p> <p>Hard to know what the student learned in depth.</p>	<p>Lots of teacher time for preparation, application, and evaluation of the activity.</p> <p>It requires working with small groups to be effective.</p> <p>It is necessary to select the essential content, which must be worked hard.</p>

Source: Authors-generated material.

The steps of PBL

Tutorial groups consist of 8 to 11 students and a tutor, occur twice a week, and last 2 to 4 hours. Learning is **self-directed**, characterized by independent information-seeking and intellectual curiosity. However, learning is still **active, collaborative, and integrates theory with practice** (Figure 3).

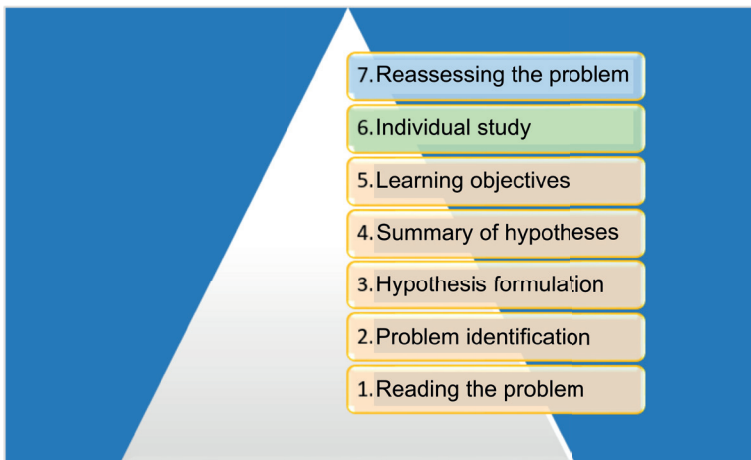
Figure 3. Collaborative learning in the tutorial group.



Source: Authors-generated material.

This teaching and learning methodology is divided into seven steps, presented below (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Steps of Problem-Based Learning.



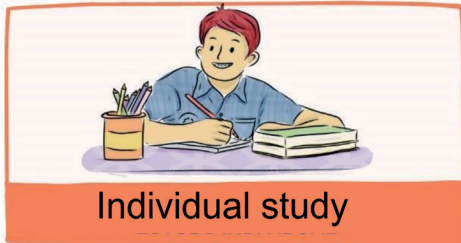
Source: Authors-generated material.

1°. Reading the Problem

In this step, the students are first introduced to the problem, which, in medical schools, is usually a hypothetical clinical case or based on some real case performed by a tutor in his or her practice life.

At this point, no student has consolidated knowledge about the subject. Then, the students read the problem, initially individually and then with the group, and define the unknown terms.

About the unfamiliar terms, the tutor can help students to find out what they mean (if it is vital for the development of the discussion) or leave it as an assignment for students to research at home. Such terms are usually words, medical abbreviations, names of medicines, or some semiological sign.



2°. Problem Identification

After reading, the students should identify the problems presented in that clinical case.

In the second step, the students try to list the problems that will help formulate the diagnostic hypotheses, trying to identify the symptoms, signs, epidemiological data, and evolution of the disease. That is, they will put the pieces of the puzzle together.

At this point, the tutor is of utmost importance, and it is his job to guide the students in choosing the best pieces to build the best diagnostic hypothesis. Many students focus

mainly on the signs, symptoms, and exams available, and it is the tutor's role to pay attention to information that may have gone unnoticed, but that is of great relevance to the case, such as age, gender, family history, occupation, and housing. This is where the tutor's practical experience comes to the fore, as he or she highlights particularities in the text that the student does not usually notice.



3°. Hypothesis Formulation

After the problems are identified, the students formulate hypotheses about that case. This is the moment of discussion. Students must show their views, work on their prior knowledge, discuss with peers, and tutor the main diagnostic hypotheses for that case. With the pieces collected in step 2, students must correlate symptoms, signs, and timing to make sense.

On this occasion, the tutor needs to guide the students not to run away from the correct path without directly providing the information. Many tutors often ask questions that make students think about the path that should be followed at that moment.

4°. Summary of hypotheses

In this step, the students, together with the tutor,

summarize the hypotheses presented and recap the problems and why those hypotheses arose.

5°. Learning objectives

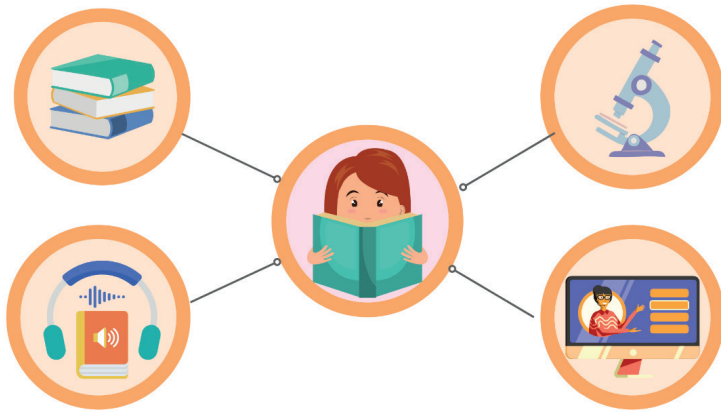
After the hypotheses are established, objectives should be formulated for the students to seek information about that suspicion. The tutor can assist his students by pointing out the material for a better search for knowledge.

These objectives should cover the topic so that the student, by following them, can approach the subject in the best possible way. Moreover, since tutoring is a method that can be used almost any semester, these objectives must fit the student's academic moment. This way, the same subject can be covered at different times during the undergraduate course. Therefore, the learning objectives for a tutorial in the eighth semester have to be addressed differently if that same topic is present in the second semester, for example.

6°. Individual study

After the end of the tutorial, the student must seek, by their own means, knowledge about the subject covered in the first tutorial meeting. It is an individual study where the student searches for books, articles, video lessons, or any other source of knowledge to prepare for the following tutorial.

The objectives defined in step 5 serve as a basis for the student to know what he needs to focus on in his study.



7°. Reassessing the problem

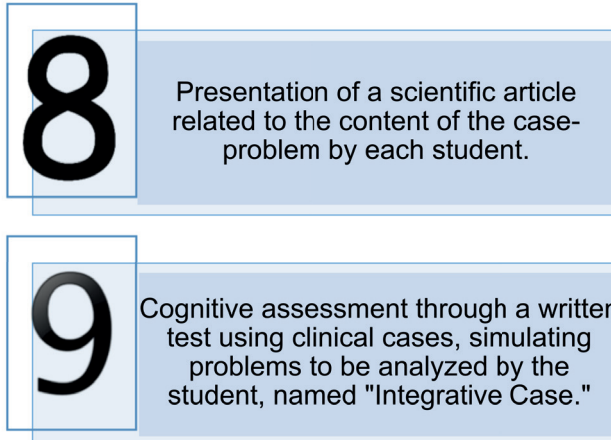
This step takes place on a second tutorial day. At this point, the student should arrive at the tutorial having already studied the subject and mastered the learning objectives that will guide the tutorial.

Since it was an individual study and not given by a single teacher (as in traditional classes), the students come with knowledge acquired from different sources. This way, the discussion tends to be rich since each student has different knowledge about the same topic. As each student adds to the debate, at the end of the tutoring, an approach to the topic is taken from different angles, making the knowledge complete.

In this step, the tutor has more power of speech because this is where he shows his theoretical and practical knowledge; he talks about his experience and what he usually sees daily. As in this tutoring, the students already present knowledge about the subject; the tutor can add, correct, and give an opinion about the information given. This is the moment when knowledge is consolidated and put into practice.

At the Christus University Center, where PBL started in 2004, there was an adaptation of the process with the addition of two steps (Figure 5):

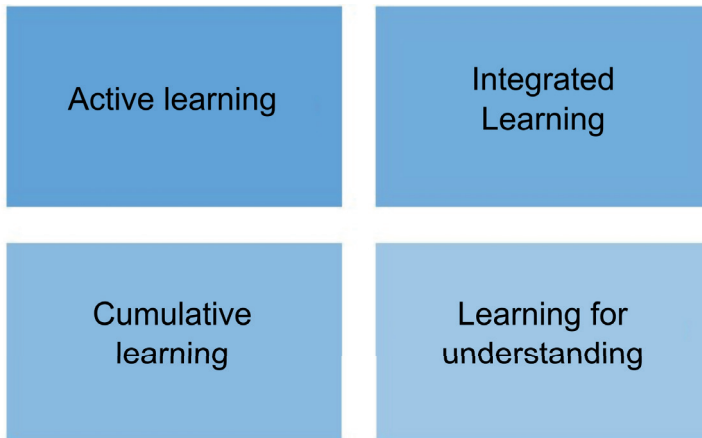
Figure 5. Additional steps of PBL in the Christus University Center.



Source: Authors-generated material.

We can mention that these are the educational objectives of PBL (Figure 6):

Figure 6. Educational goals of Problem-Based Learning.



Source: Authors-generated material.

PBL Tutor's Assignments

In PBL, the tutor plays the role of mediator, being able to guide students in the learning process, stimulating them to discover, interpret, and learn from real situations, providing

independent, active, and responsible student activity.

This role involves creating and presenting problematic scenarios to collaborate with student learning, monitoring each student's learning process, encouraging competence development in analysis and synthesis, and providing the necessary support for any difficulties the group encounters.

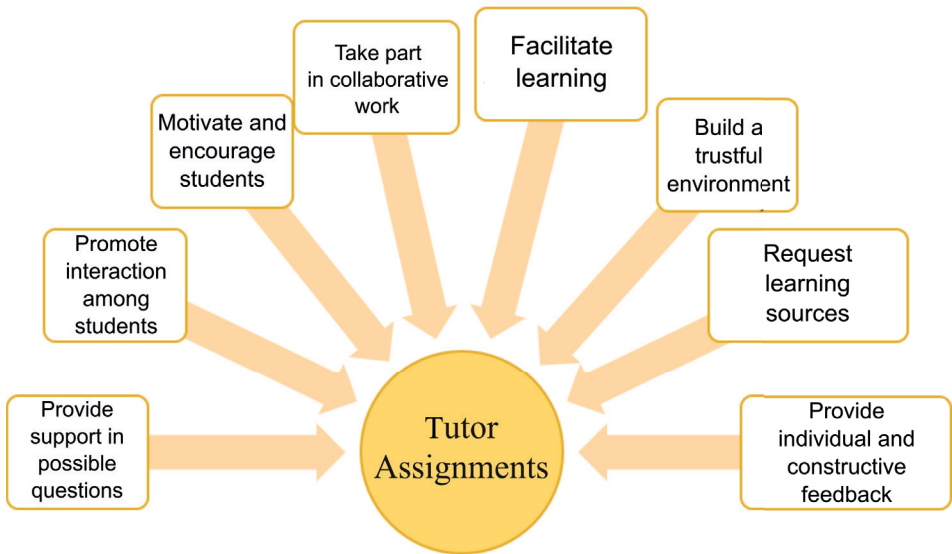
In this context, the tutor is co-responsible for the organization of the space and relationships in the tutoring group. Therefore, he must be attentive to the divergences in the group and each one's participation, maintaining the flow of the discussions and directing them towards the problem, avoiding deviations of focus.

It is recommended that the tutor provide feedback to the students to understand their difficulties and suggest reflections to improve the learning process.

The tutor's attributions in PBL are (Figure 7):



Figure 7. Assignments of the Problem-Based Learning tutor.



Source: Authors-generated material.

REMINDER

It is not the tutor's job:

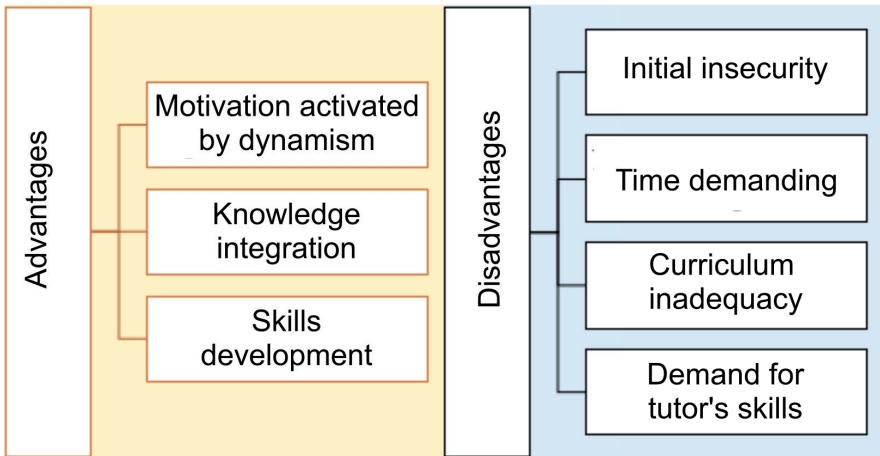
- Lecture on the topic or topics of the problems, but rather facilitate student discussion so that students can identify what they need to study to learn the scientific foundations of that topic.
- Intimidate the students with their own knowledge, and should formulate appropriate questions for students to enrich their discussions when necessary.

In the context of mentoring, the student needs to develop the ability to discover information, solve problems and learn the necessary content. In PBL, learning is the student's responsibility, more clearly than in other teaching methodologies.

Advantages and disadvantages of PBL

The traditional study has been losing space to PBL, an alternative active teaching methodology for several courses, including undergraduate and graduate. However, as in any transition, new methods have advantages and disadvantages, and this new type of teaching is no different. Next, we will look at some positive and negative points of PBL (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Advantages and disadvantages of Problem-Based Learning.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Advantages

- **Motivation activated by dynamism:** students usually have a greater desire to learn due to discussions of real, contextualized, seductive case problems that provide gaps in knowledge, which lead to intrinsic motivation and the active search for knowledge.
- **Knowledge integration:** PBL enables meaningful learning by putting together the knowledge and the new, as well as favoring a greater transmission of knowledge.

- **Skills development:**

Critical thinking: In scenarios of discussions and debates for case resolution, the student needs to seek knowledge and know how to defend his point of view, so it is necessary to develop this skill.

Interpersonal relationships: Interpersonal skills (empathy, assertiveness, and others) and communication skills are experienced in the tutor-student interaction during tutorial sessions and are revealed in the “giving and receiving feedback.” Students are invited to interact with differences, through which they build skills and attitudes to face the new, the unknown. Diversity must be affirmed within a critical, transformative vision of social, cultural, and institutional relations within the educational process (McLaren, 2020).

Disadvantages

- **Initial insecurity:** since PBL is something new in education, some people may have difficulties adapting to the methodology of active search for knowledge and the personal evaluation of their performance during tutorial group meetings.
- **Time demanding:** PBL methodology demands more time than traditional teaching for knowledge to be realized, usually comprising two tutoring sessions for one problem-case. The student needs more time for the individual active search for knowledge, and the tutor needs more time to evaluate his students.
- **Curriculum inadequacy:** since PBL has the problem-case as the basis of the methodology, many times, some subjects and disciplines are not adequately discussed and deepened in a curriculum that is not molded for PBL, and a imbalance in student learning.
- **Demand for tutor’s skills:** for the PBL methodology to be efficient, it is necessary that the tutor has some skills to guide his tutorial group. The method may suffer losses if the instructor does not have these skills.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TUTOR

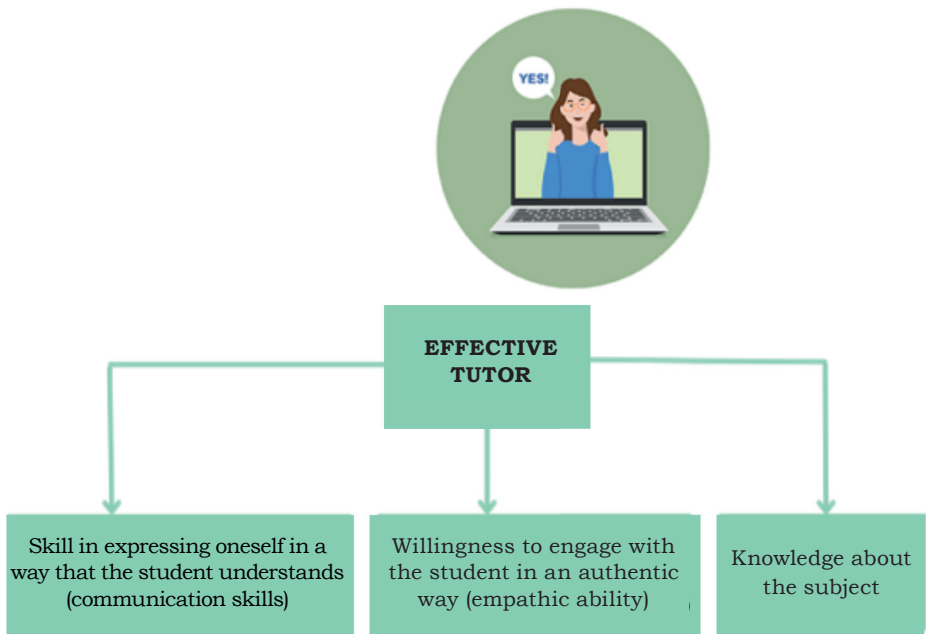
Claudia Oliveira, Daniela Santos, João Pedro Reis

In Problem-Based Learning (PBL), the tutor has a very different educational role from traditional teaching, with a direct influence on the functioning of the tutorial group.

What are the characteristics of an effective tutor?

According to Schmidt and Moust (1995), for quality tutoring, the tutor needs three characteristics (Figure 9):

Figure 9. Characteristics of an effective tutor.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The tutor needs the competence to stimulate group discussion, a characteristic of “social work skills”.

The best tutors are not those with the most knowledge but those with the most social skills.



In a tutorial group, the tutor, as well as the student, needs to develop social skills to foster a more conducive environment for learning.

Three interdependent competence domains are essential for the tutor (Figure 10):

Figure 10. Important competence domains for the PBL tutor.



Social congruence: establishing a welcoming and open discussion environment and the ability to communicate informally and empathize with students.



Cognitive congruence: the ability to discuss and question students to encourage them to study.



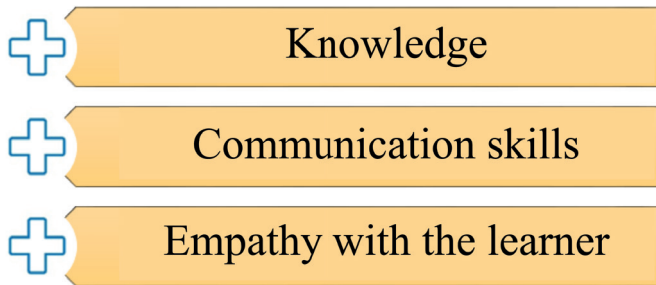
Content congruence: domain of the contents explored in the problems.

Source: Authors-generated material.

The theory of the effective tutor blends two distinct perspectives prevalent in the literature. One perspective emphasizes the personal qualities of the tutor: his/her ability to communicate with students in an informal manner, along with an empathetic attitude that allows the tutor to encourage student learning by creating an atmosphere in which the open exchange of ideas is facilitated.

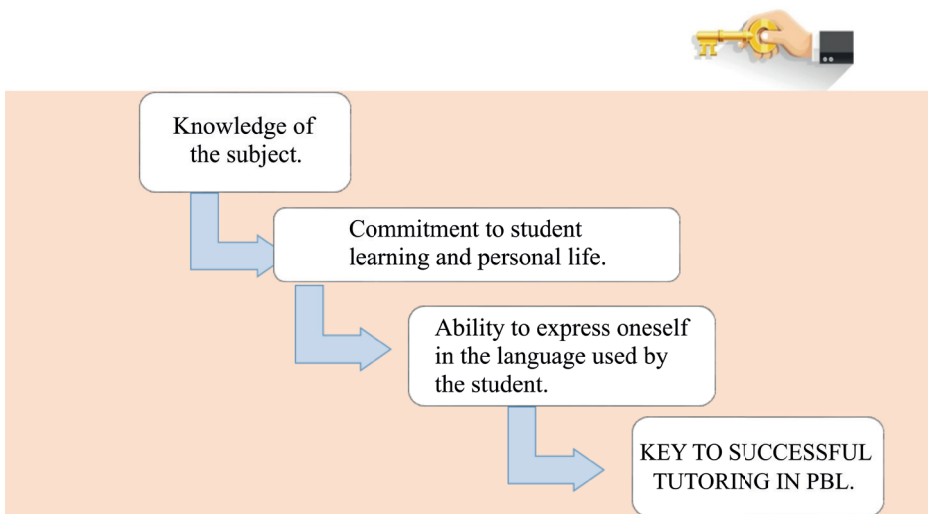
The other perspective highlights the tutor's knowledge of the subject as a determinant of learning (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11. Effective tutor theory.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Figure 12. The key to successful PBL learning.



Source: Authors-generated material.

PBL tutors help students identify what they know and do not know ► **a powerful setup for productive learning.**

“Human beings are fine while they ignore their ignorance: this is our normal condition. But when we know what we do not know, we cannot stand it” (Lewis Thomas, 1992).

One should always remember the importance of disciplinary experience and teaching facilitation skills. In this context, the most effective PBL tutors are often not the most experienced tutors. They are usually faculty members with good social skills who appreciate the PBL process and care about the students in their group.

Disciplinary knowledge helps to be a good PBL tutor and should not be underestimated, but overall facilitation skills are the most important (Figure 13).

Figure 13. The PBL tutor as a learning facilitator.



The PBL tutor plays a crucial role as a learning process facilitator.

Source: Authors-generated material.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE, SOCIAL PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Yasmim Berni, Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira

In contemporary society, social skills (SS) are constantly used so that interpersonal relationships are harmonious and their consequences (social competence) produce positive results for the community.

How are social skills defined, competence and social performance?

These terms have various definitions and are often confused and used as synonyms. The definition and separation of the terms can be seen in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Definition of social skills, social competence, and social performance.



Social skills: a set of behaviors in a given group/community where the tendency is to generate a harmonious relationship between its participants in the face of a situation (good or bad), thus causing an overall favorable performance of the group.

Del PRETTE e Del PRETTE, 2001



Social competence: is the assessment of an individual's performance in his relationships with others, where it can be verified whether he has achieved the goals expected by him and the group, which may have a positive or negative result.

Del PRETTE e Del PRETTE, 2017



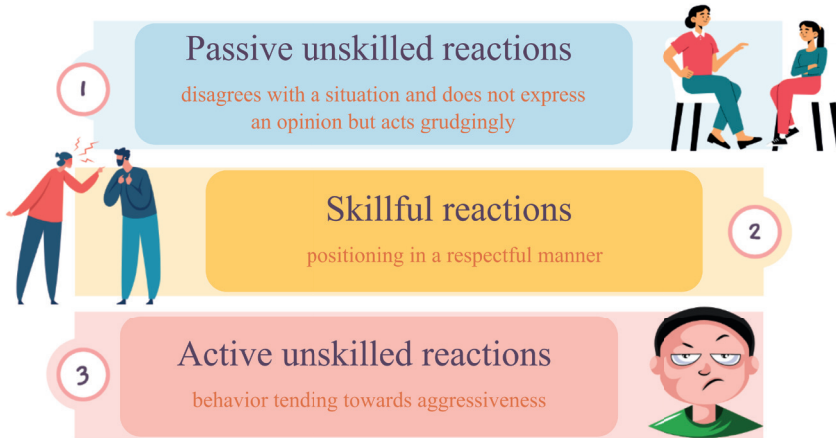
Social performance: behaviors in any social situation, including skillful and non-skillful, passive, and active reactions.

Del PRETTE e Del PRETTE, 2008

Source: Authors-generated material.

What are skillful, non-skillful active, and non-skillful passive reactions (Figure 15)

Figure 15. Skillful, active non-skillful, and passive non-skillful reactions



Source: Authors-generated material.

Skillful reaction: attitudes that aid social competence by the consistency between overt and covert behaviors that match the situation's needs and the consequences of the attitudes.

Example: The person with a skillful reaction can position himself coherently and respectfully when facing a problem, having the intelligence to disagree with the majority opinion and defend his point of view without making the other feel disrespected or harmed.

In the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) scenario, the tutor, with a skillful attitude, can convey knowledge to students, answer questions, and maintain the harmony and respect of the tutoring group.

Active non-skillful reactions: behaviors that compromise social interaction and competence. In this type of reaction, it is common for the person to express him/herself extremely when facing certain situations, with a tendency to verbal or physical aggressiveness, irony, negativism, authoritarianism, and coercion.

Example: The person can defend his opinions and express them, but in the wrong way, making others feel disrespected or uncomfortable by the manner of the approach.

If a tutor who is skilled and has the necessary knowledge to coordinate the tutorial group uses non-skillful attitudes, such as authoritarianism, irony, and a high tone of voice to guide the group, the students feel intimidated and, consequently, cannot develop knowledge satisfactorily or have a harmonious student-tutor relationship.

Passive non-able responses: a set of covert behaviors in the face of a context. People with non-skillful reactions often react covertly to situations of discomfort, hurt, and resentment, leading to avoidance of interpersonal demands rather than confrontation.

Example: These people cannot express their opinions, avoid expressing themselves in public, and accept what has been decided in a group, even if they disagree.

Continuing in the same PBL scenario, the tutor who has passive non-skillful reactions generates an environment of uncertainty, especially in the students, leaving the tutorial group disharmonious and the methodology impaired.

In light of this, SS is needed in various fields of life, such as professional, educational, family, and social (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Social skills are necessary for good performance in various fields of personal and professional life.



Source: Authors-generated material.

What are the social skills that result in a favorable social competence?

There are many HS, which are developed and improved according to maturity and experience the learning process of the individual.

Examples:

Communication skills (know how to express yourself, initiate and maintain a conversation)
Skills to express feelings (show affection, empathy, solidarity)
Civility skills (greeting, politeness)
Conflict management skills (know how to calm down, have self-control)
Public speaking skills (communicating, audible tone of voice)
Group coordination skills (organize activities, distribute tasks)

This shows the importance of SS for developing individuals and better group coexistence. The different types of HS will be better addressed in a later chapter of this manual.

SS can be considered essential for the socio-emotional development and adjustment of the individual.

Given this scenario, PBL needs the involvement of several SS, especially from the tutor, since he is a teacher who aims to stimulate his tutorial group to solve the case-problem. If he cannot promote organization, logical reasoning, and good interaction in the group, the teaching method may be harmed since he does not transmit information directly but facilitates the organization of the students' ideas, being a guide for his group. The tutor's task is to lead the student to develop autonomy in the search for knowledge besides maturing and amplifying his SS.

In PBL, students must have some initial skills to have a good discussion and interaction with the other participants. In addition, the tutor should use techniques to guide his students to achieve the objectives of the problem-case without losing focus, achieving positive social competence for the group. However, we must remember that if there is no balance between the tutor and the students, not all students will mature their knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary that the group of students, together with the tutor, review their SS and their interaction in class (Figure 17).

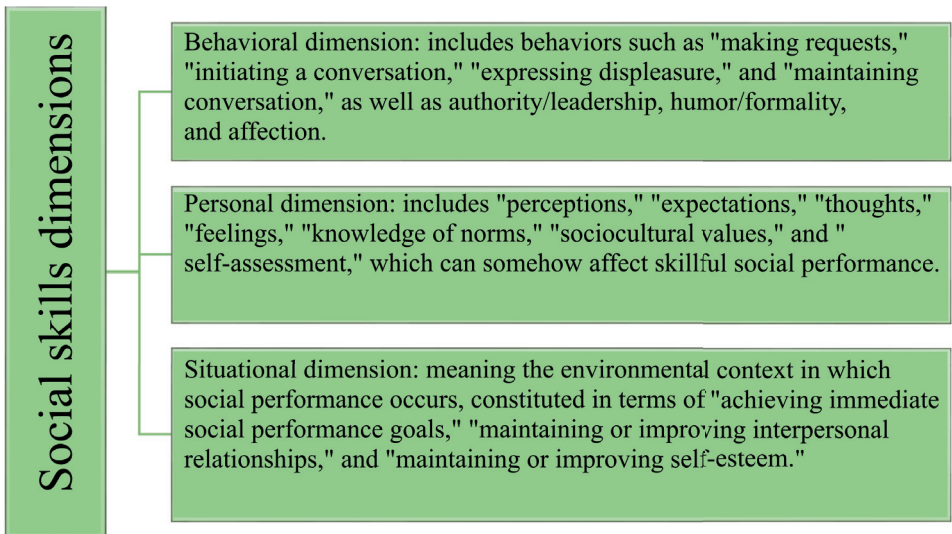
Figure 17. Importance of balancing the social skills of tutors and students.



Source: Authors-generated material.

There are three descriptive dimensions of the SS construct, according to Caballo (1987/1991) and Del Prette and Del Prette (1996). (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Descriptive dimensions of the social skills construct.



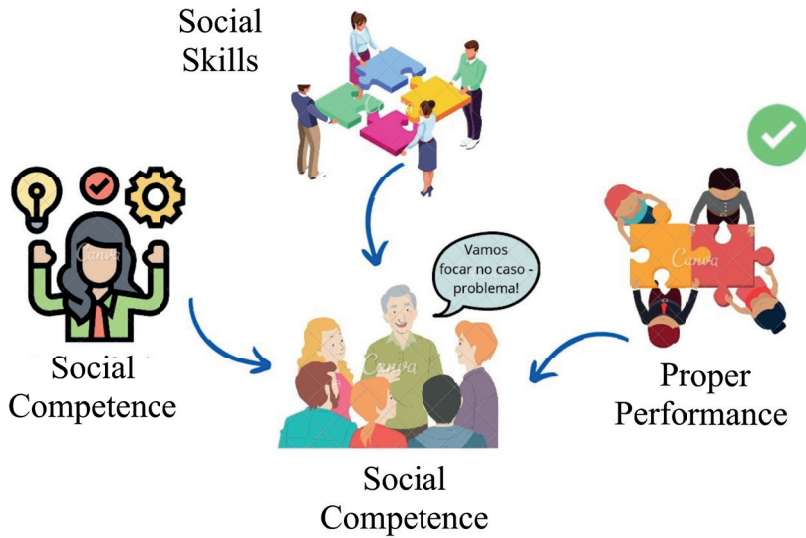
Source: Authors-generated material.

Don't forget!

- SS reflects the ability to behave appropriately in different contexts and with different types of people, resulting in a high probability of generating positive consequences for the individual and the social group.
- Social competence results from a circumstance/discussion where SS was needed for the best possible group performance.
- Social competence is situational, meaning being competent in one situation does not mean being competent in another. Social competence is subject to values, cultural norms, and personal characteristics.
- A SS score indicates an individual's repertoire in a sample of situations. Having a good repertoire of social skills does not imply good social performance. Personal factors (thoughts, values, feelings, goals) can positively or negatively influence an individual's social competence.
- Competence and social performance are of fundamental importance for professional performance.

The interrelationship between social competence and HS is constantly used in PBL for original and mutual learning and good group performance (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Interrelation of social skills, social competence, and social performance in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

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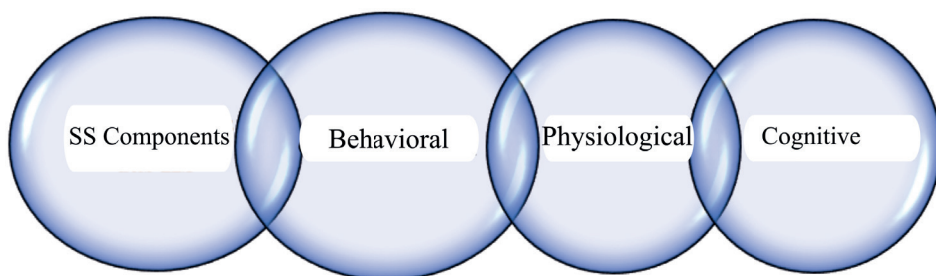
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THE COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Jessica Cidrão, Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira

The SS of tutors interfere directly with student learning in the PBL active methodology and can be divided into behavioral, physiological, and cognitive (Figure 20).

Figure 20. The components of social skills.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The behavioral components of SS were divided into four items (Caballo, 2020), described below in Table 2:

Table 2. Behavioral components of Social Skills.

Non-verbal components	includes gaze, response latency, smiling, gestures, facial expression, posture, distance/ proximity, body expression, self handling, orientation, and personal appearance.
Paralinguistic components	includes voice, speech timing, speech disorders, and speech fluency.
Verbal Components	are the general content of speech, starting a conversation, and feedback, which is the listeners' response so that the individual can modify your verbalization accordingly.
More General Mixed Components	consisting of affection, spontaneous, positive conduct, timing, speaking up, giving way, conversation in general and know how to listen.

Source: Authors-generated material.

Nonverbal communication occurs when the individual continues to send messages about themselves to others, through their face and body, when they choose not to speak or are unable to communicate verbally.

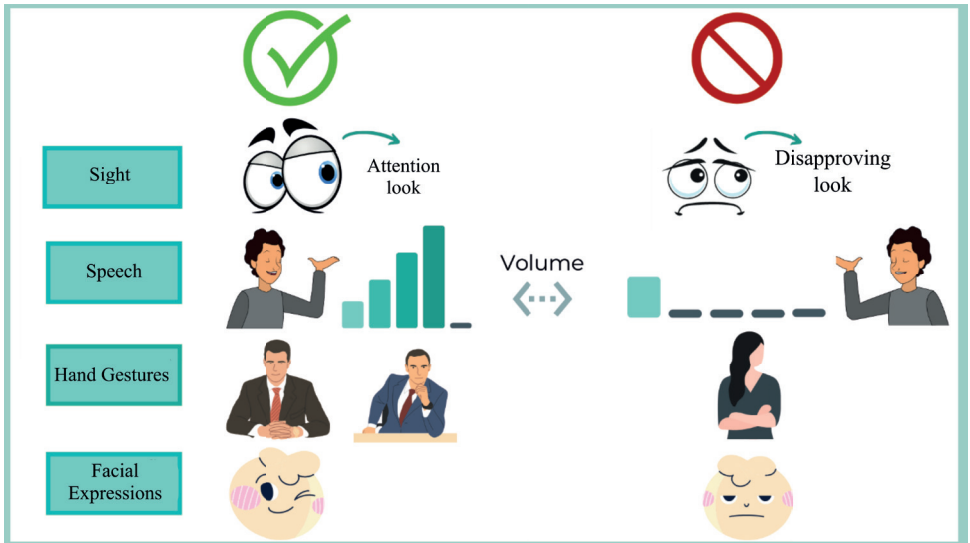
Nonverbal communication in the context of PBL is fundamental, and the tutor must be aware of what messages he sends to the group. Likewise, the students will also receive the messages in a non-conscious way, forming impressions of the group.

Eye contact, facial expression, voice quality, hand gestures, content, and fluency of the tutor are all elements that must be adequate for the tutor to be socially adept and to be able to develop his role appropriately (Figure 21).

For example: if the tutor has a speech that encourages the student's learning, but the look is one of disapproval, probably the student will not feel encouraged

The tutor can correct the student using non-verbal communication that is positive for the student and helps to seek the best path and not correct it in a way that fails the student.

Figure 21. Non-verbal communication in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Paralinguistic components refer to “how one speaks.” Speech can communicate different messages when it is interfered with by certain vocal cues, such as volume, laughter, yawning, pauses, emphasis, clarity of speech, and speed.

Successful individuals tend to sound more confident and secure, which is very important in the context of tutoring as a way for students to feel more secure in the environment and their learning. Learning is not only determined by cognitive processes but also by the social sphere, which depends on a safe and satisfying interaction between the tutor and student (Figure 22).

Figure 22. Learning depends on a satisfactory interaction between the tutor and students.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Also important is the latency time, the silence between the end of the individual's speech and the beginning of another's speech. Again, a long latency is more appropriate for the learning context, as it is a passive, less aggressive, uninterrupted behavior (Figure 23).

Figure 23. The paralinguistic components of social skills.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The **verbal components** include the overall content and feedback, the latter being necessary for the speaker to maintain or modify his verbalizations. The individual needs to know whether he is being understood and believed and whether the listeners are satisfied, surprised, or annoyed (Figure 24).

Example: a student is verbalizing his knowledge and gets feedback from his tutor → this action will help to continue his reasoning and verbalization.

Figure 24. Feedback between tutor and students in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENT

People are usually able to have control over what they say but have less control over how they say it. This difficulty in control is possibly associated with physiological changes in emotional states.

The physiological components can be perceived through heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow, and breathing rate. With emotions and feelings that the environment can trigger in the individual, activation of the sympathetic nervous system can occur, altering these physiological components.

Some studies point out that individuals with high social skills take less time to reduce their sympathetic nervous system activation than individuals with low social skills (Caballo, 2020).

In this way, the tutor with well-developed HS will be able to control his physiological components to let this alter the teaching-learning environment as little as possible, communicating fewer messages that may be negative to the group (Figure 25).

Figure 25. The physiological components of social skills in the interaction between tutor and students in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

COGNITIVE COMPONENT

Every situation and environment directly affect an individual, but the individual cannot become a passive object of environmental forces. For this not to happen, the cognitive component of HS is needed, making the individual **ACTIVE** in choosing behaviors.

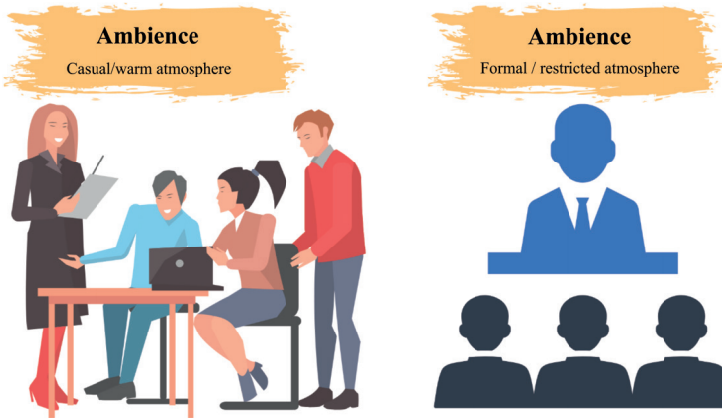
The cognitive component includes the selection of behaviors, situations, and stimuli which are of paramount importance.

The perception of the environment is essential. Each environment has a particular configuration, determining the most appropriate behavior.

There are several types of environments, each requiring a different posture from the individual, for example, formal or informal environment, warm environment, restricted environment, with different age groups of groups, among others.

Example: If the tutor perceives the tutorial group as a warm environment, he will feel more relaxed and comfortable, acting in a way that is suitable to the environment. On the other hand, if the environment is tense, the tutor will have to use some tricks to make that environment conducive to learning (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Perception of the environment is vital in social interactions.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The tutor needs to consider the age of the tutorial group and the distribution according to sex and culture, requiring a different posture for the profile of each group.

The essential characteristics of the tutor related to cognitive competence are shown in Table 3.

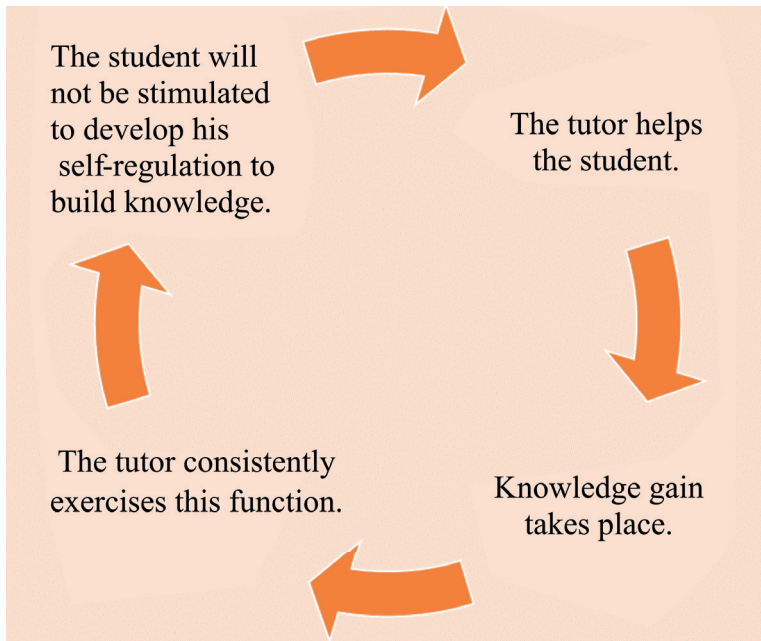
Table 3. Characteristics more important for tutor related to cognitive competence.

know when and how to intervene in the discussion
adjust to the needs of the group
stimulate clinical reasoning
questioning students in a way that encourages them to study
lead the discussion in the right direction

Source: Authors-generated material.

An alignment between tutor regulation and student self-regulation is important because, at times, tutor intervention is required, especially if students cannot employ the learning activity (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Balance between the regulation of the tutor e the student's self-regulation is important.



Source: Authors-generated material.

In this way, we can analyze each component necessary to achieve the ability to interact in a quality relationship

between the tutor and the student.

It becomes necessary to bring together and integrate all the components of SS to understand communication holistically and comprehensively because it is important to ensure a healthy socialization process, which is not only about job performance and the individual's adjustment to the institution but also about the physical and psychological well-being of students and tutors.

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THE TYPES OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Claudia Oliveira, João Pedro Reis, Daniela Santos

As mentioned before, SS are important features for the good development of tutoring and, consequently, for improving student learning.

Thus, it is necessary to know these skills so that the tutor can create a favorable environment for quality teaching-learning.

The set of relevant SS can be organized into classes and subclasses of greater or lesser scope (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001). Among the main classes, the ones shown in Figure 28 stand out.

Figure 28. The main classes of social skills.

Communication skills		Asking and answering questions, giving and asking for feedback, praising, initiating, maintaining, and ending conversations.
Civility skills		Saying please, thank you, introducing yourself, greeting.
Coping Assertive skills		Expressing opinion, disagreeing, making and refusing requests, interacting with authorities, dealing with criticism, expressing displeasure, dealing with another's anger, requesting a change in behavior, etc.
Empathetic skills		Paraphrasing, reflecting feelings and expressing support, making friends, expressing solidarity, and cultivating love.
Professional Social skills		Group coordination, public speaking, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict mediation, and social and educational skills of parents, teachers, and other agents involved in education or training.
Self-awareness skills		General ability to observe, describe, interpret, and regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in social situations. <i>tos e comportamentos em situações sociais</i>

Source: Authors-generated material.

Other SS, according to Del Prette and Del Prette (2017), are:

► **Making and maintaining friendships:** involves initiating conversation, listening and confiding, being kind, complimenting, giving feedback, not being intrusive, keeping in touch, and messaging, among others;

► **Expressing affection and intimacy:** refers to dating and sex, getting close to the other person, showing affection through touch and affectionate words, maintaining good humor, dealing with intimate relationships, and setting boundaries when necessary;

► **Respect:** the ability to accept people, their opinions, thoughts, and actions, even if these thoughts and opinions are not shared;

► **Active listening:** is the ability to listen attentively to other people, demonstrating that they are being heard;

► **Negotiation:** the ability to negotiate with other people about different interests so that all parties to the negotiation benefit;

► **Understanding:** the ability to understand social and personal situations and respond to them assertively;

► **Autocontrol:** ability to understand and interpret particular feelings and respond to them, controlling one's impulses;

► **Conflict resolution:** ability to understand the reality of a conflict and seek alternatives to resolve it, eschewing aggression. A good way to resolve a conflict can be a negotiation.

A summary of the SS types is shown in Figure 29.

Figure 29. Types of social skills.



Source: Authors-generated material.

In addition to the previously described types of HS, Del Prette and Del Prette (2001) proposed the concept of educational social skills (HSE).

This concept applies to teacher-student relationships and to other formal contexts (for example, in-service training programs in organizations).

According to Del Prette and Del Prette (2001):

SOCIAL EDUCATIONAL SKILLS → are aimed at promoting the development and learning of others, in formal or informal

SES presupposes the appropriate use of non-verbal (gestures, facial and body expressions) and linguistic components (speech volume and form, clarity, fluency, emphasis, among others) (Del Prette and Del Prette, 2005).

SS can be classified as intrapersonal and interpersonal (Chart 4).

Table 4. Intrapersonal and interpersonal social skills

INTRAPERSONAL	INTERPERSONAL
Solving Problems	Non-verbal communication
Increase pleasurable activities	Assertiveness
Controlling Anger	Start, maintain and end conversations
Dealing with anxiety	Speaking and listening to opinions
Dealing with frustration	Talking and listening to feelings
Identify negative and dysfunctional feelings/thoughts	Giving and receiving criticism in a respectful manner
	Giving and receiving compliments

Source: Authors-generated material.

Intrapersonal skills enable a person to use effective thought processes (conscious and subconscious) and mental habits to succeed in personal and professional relationships and contribute to effective decisions and actions. Important among them are emotional self-knowledge, emotional control, and self-motivation.

Interpersonal skills translate a person's ability to interact positively and cooperatively with others. The most important interpersonal skills for the work context or teamwork are conflict and problem-solving, communication, and patience.

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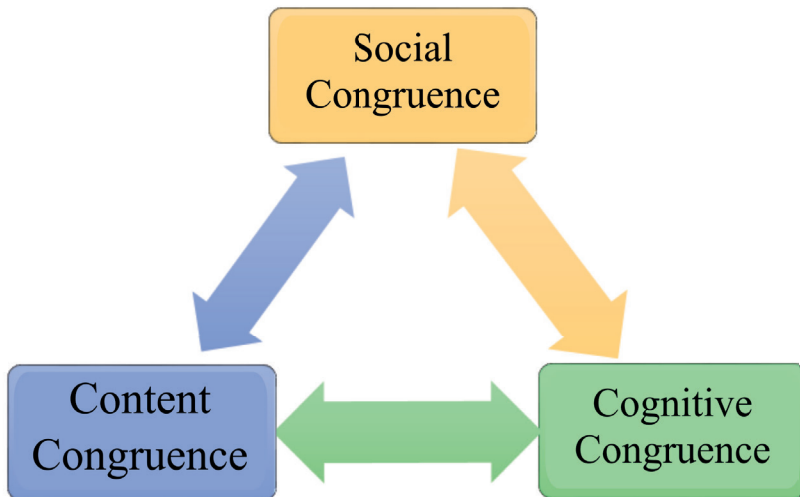
THE SOCIAL, COGNITIVE AND CONTENT CONGRUENCE

João Pedro Reis, Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira

In the 1990s, Schmidt & Moust (1995), from the University of Limburg in the Netherlands, using a structural equation model, found social congruence (social alignment with students), content knowledge, and cognitive congruence (ability to discuss and question students in a way that stimulates them to study) to be important characteristics of the effective tutor. In the model equated by these authors, these domains are interdependent.

Content knowledge is necessary to exercise regulation of breadth and depth of discussions (cognitive congruence) which contributes to tutors and students being more comfortable in developing their learning process in a safe environment without excessive tension (social congruence) (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Interdependence of social, cognitive, and content.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Expertise or Congruence of Content

Content knowledge (or expertise) is a skill that refers to

the tutor's knowledge about a certain subject. We still do not have a definition of what an "expert" tutor is. Some authors define it as clinical experience, others as specialization in the field. Despite this lack of standardization, this skill is understood as the tutor's theoretical and practical knowledge of that subject (Martins, Falbo Neto, Silva, 2018).

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE: expresses the tutor's mastery of the topic.

CONTENT EXPERT: an individual who possesses skills and knowledge derived from training and experience.

According to the literature, the characteristics of expertise in tutoring include content knowledge and general and applied pedagogical knowledge of content; commitment to increasing the cognitive challenges offered to students throughout their learning; encouragement of reasoning and articulation of concepts; and dedication of substantial effort to stimulating and motivating students (Grave, Dolmans, Vleuten, 1999).

The tutor performs a supportive role for students, providing support for students to think for themselves. There is a cognitive gap between what the student can learn by himself and what he can learn with the assistance of a person with a higher level of knowledge. In the active learning methodology, the tutor cannot directly transmit his expertise to the student but must probe the student's knowledge and stimulate specific cognitive activities. They should be a facilitator of learning in PBL, and this learning should be self-directed by the students.

WWe know that a good tutor needs to know the content being taught to be able to talk, ask questions, go into depth, and comment on the differences found between theory and medical practice, as certain details are not found in the books, only the experience that provides such learning (Figure 31).

Figure 31. Content congruence is fundamental for a richer debate between tutors and students in PBL.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Social Congruence

Here we are referring to the tutor's interpersonal intelligence. In quality tutoring, the tutor has to know how to make the environment pleasant, have empathy, and have a good relationship with his students to provide a more favorable learning environment.

A hostile environment, where the student is uncomfortable, hampers learning since it prevents the student from asking and speaking during the discussion.

Therefore, social congruence is an extremely important tutor skill because your students will feel comfortable learning (Figure 32).

Figure 32. Social congruence as an essential ability of the tutor, providing a pleasant and harmonious environment for better learning in PBL.

Social Congruence



It is the tutor's ability to make the environment more pleasant and harmonious so that his students feel more comfortable participating and learning.

Source: Authors-generated material.

Cognitive Congruence

This ability refers to the tutor's ability to adapt all their knowledge into an acceptable language so his students can understand. We know that the tutor has a higher level of expertise than their students, which often makes it challenging to dialog with them.

Therefore, cognitive congruence is the skill that helps to make all the tutor's knowledge best understood by his students (Figure 33).

Figure 33. The importance of cognitive congruence in PBL tutoring.

Cognitive Congruence



It is the ability to express yourself in a way that the student understands in the best way. This congruence shows the tutor's ability to adapt his language so that all his knowledge is shared in the best way among his students. It is the ability to make yourself understood despite the difference in expertise between the tutor and the students.

Source: Authors-generated material.

In the study by Sousa, Falbo Neto, and Falbo (2021), where 34 tutors participated, 88.7%, 93.6%, and 98.9% of the tutors had cognitive congruence, social congruence, and knowledge of the content present, respectively. In a study conducted at Christus University Center, where 74 ABP tutors were evaluated, it was found that 96.5%, 84.1%, and 97.3% of tutors have moderate or high cognitive congruence, social congruence, and content knowledge, respectively.

Cognitive congruence depends on social and content congruence to occur satisfactorily.

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SOCIAL SKILLS IN PBL

Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira

SS are related to academic adjustment, job performance, and the psychological well-being of college students.

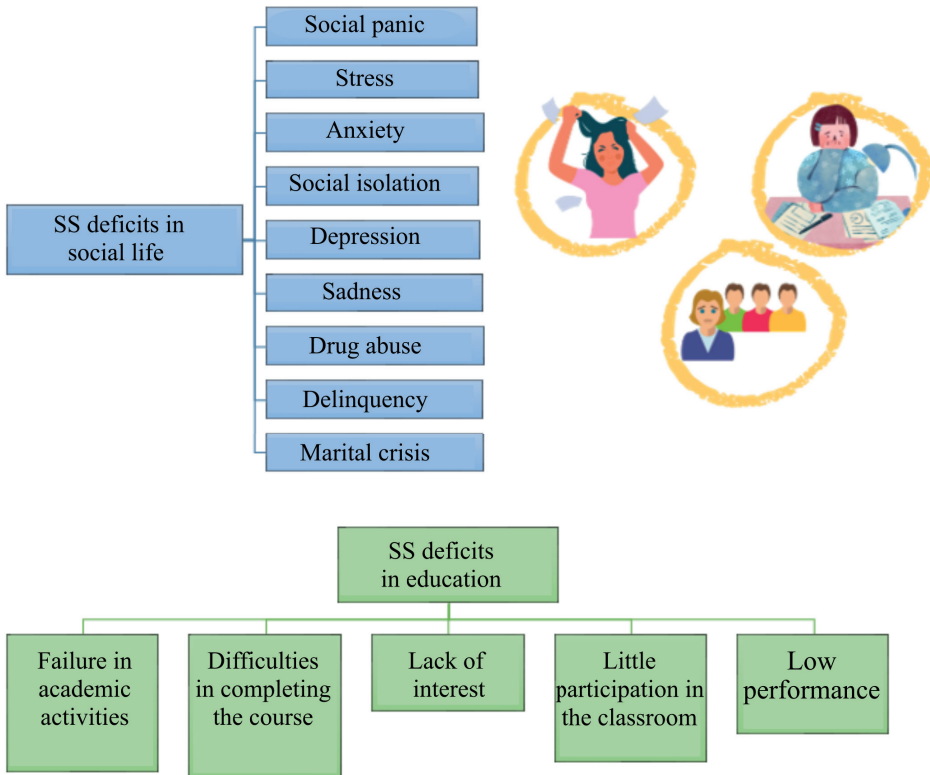
SS deficiencies can influence the teaching environment and are related to higher stress levels, as well as to depression and social panic.

Interpersonal interaction difficulties in college students are associated with a high prevalence of psychological disorders, failure in academic activities, and even difficulty completing the course started.

SS favor positive social relationships and help the individual in situations such as discrimination between objects, situations, or stimuli, application of rules, identification, construction, and problem-solving, constituting fundamental elements for social competence. SS deficits hamper the individual's social functioning and adaptive capacity, with several losses, especially for social interaction, and may generate intense psychological suffering. The individual with SS deficiency feels maladjusted and finds it difficult in romantic relationships, in starting new friendships, in accepting and making criticisms, claiming rights, in asking for help, among others, which can result in social isolation, feeling of loneliness, and personal incapacity (Figure 34).

HS can help reduce social anxiety states, which hinder satisfying interpersonal relationships. A low SS repertoire may be associated with **social anxiety** (heightened fear of social situations), low self-esteem, excessive shyness, conflicts in romantic relationships, and other factors. From an academic point of view, it can impact the student's performance in the university environment and result in anxiety disorders.

Figure 34. Consequences of social skills deficiencies on social and academic life.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The relationship between SS deficiency and **depression** can result in learning difficulties for the student. This demonstrates that the search for improvement in the teaching-learning process must go through structuring the students' and tutors' HS development.

In the higher education sphere, the teacher-student relationship can have an impact on different aspects of the academic experience, such as adaptation to the university, interest, and participation in the classroom, development of ethical values for professional practice, competencies for the exercise of citizenship and permanence in university, as described by several authors (Oliveira et al., 2014; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Marinho-araújo & Almeida, 2016).

In Del Prette et al. (2004) study evaluating 564 psychology undergraduate students, it was detected that the most frequent SS were the assertive skills (Factor 1 of IHS-Del Prette: confrontation and self-assertion with risk), the SS of conversation and social resourcefulness (Factor 3) and the SS of self-exposure to unknown and new situations (Factor 4). In turn, the least frequent SS were the expression of positive affect (Factor 2) and self-control of aggressiveness (Factor 5).

Bolsoni-Silva and Loureiro (2014), evaluating 288 university students, among them 144 with anxiety disorder, found an association between HS and anxiety, highlighting public speaking, potentialities, difficulties, and total SS score as predictors of social anxiety.

The types of SS deficits, indicated by SS at a level lower than expected in the face of social demand, are shown in Table 5, according to Angélico et al. (2006). A demand is understood as the situation in front of which a certain social performance is expected about one or more people

Table 5. Types of social skills deficiencies.

Types of SS Deficit	Meaning
Acquisition deficit	It is characterized by the non-occurrence of the skill in the face of the demands of the environment
Performance deficit	It is characterized by the occurrence of a specific skill with frequency lower than expected in the face of the demands of the environment
Fluency deficit	It is characterized by the occurrence of the ability with lower proficiency than expected in the face of the social demands

Source: Authors-generated material.

The relationship quality between teacher and student depends on the teacher's repertoire of social education skills (SES). A teacher with good SES can adequately manage the teaching-learning process, which may result in changes in the students' behavioral repertoire. The role of the teacher as a facilitator or mediator in the teaching environment is fundamental to an effective teaching-learning process (Figure 35).

Figure 35. The relationship quality between the tutor and student depends on the tutor's repertoire of educational and social skills.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Improving teachers' SS can help foster a more interactive environment, thus contributing to the student's academic development. This reinforces the concept that a good SS repertoire is necessary not only for the student but also for teachers/tutors to provide a better environment for learning.

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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS' SOCIAL SKILLS

Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira

Most students entering university are in the final stage of adolescence and still experiencing dilemmas and doubts common to this time of life: questions and insecurities. Of course, it is natural and even necessary for these conflicts to exist in this period of entry into university. Still, it is essential to be alert to possible difficulties that they may present and, if necessary, to develop psychosocial support strategies.

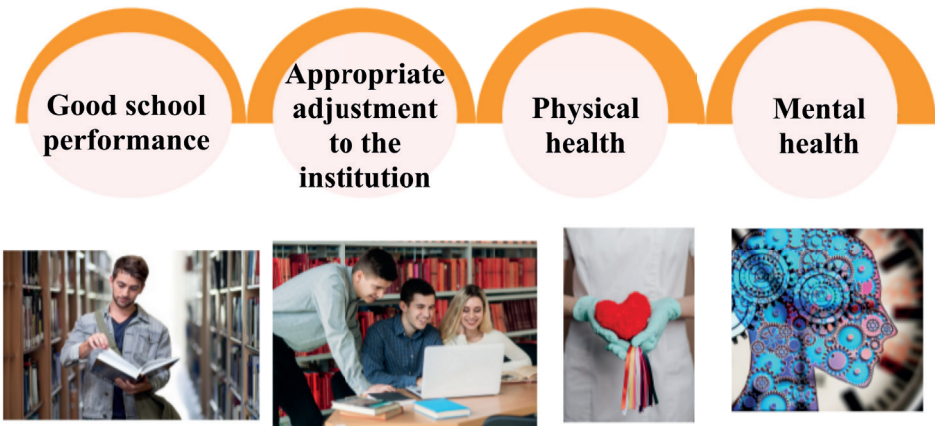
Gerk and Cunha (2006) emphasize the difficulties encountered by students going through this process of change and consider that for there to be a good adaptation of the individual to the school, the university, and the social changes that all this context brings; it becomes necessary to enable them to search for and use information in their daily life. Most of the time, the quality of the transition from high school to college depends on the student's psychosocial development, not exempting the school and the university from their responsibilities in facilitating this process. When the school defines as mission the formation of the student for life, it cannot be limited to the development of verbal and logical reasoning. In the same way, the university must have as its objective the formation of the student in an integral way, being concerned with his academic performance and school attendance. Besides this, it must encourage SS training.

In this academic context, SS is not only related to professional performance and the individual's adjustment within the institution but also the physical and psychological well-being of university students and can result in a healthy socialization process and facilitate academic adaptation (Figure 36).



Figure 36. Social skills in the academic context.

Social skills in the academic context

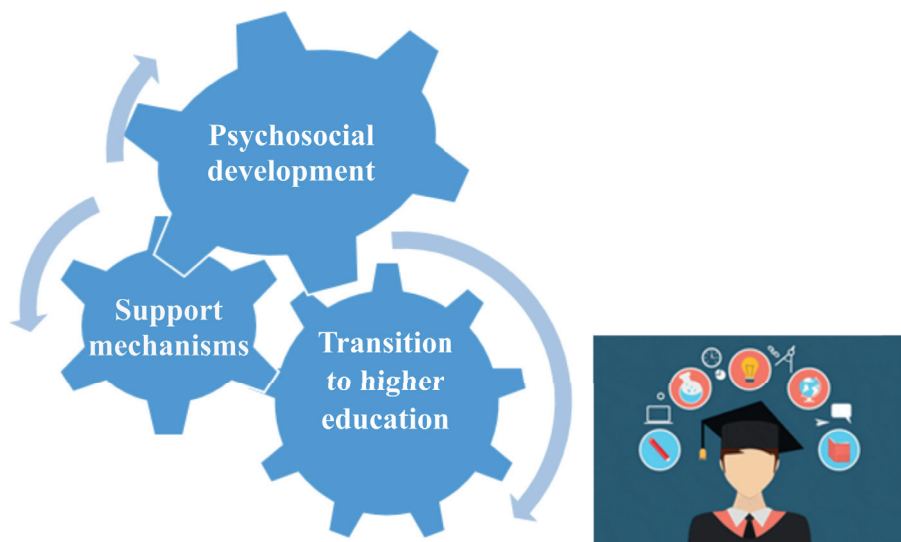


Source: Authors-generated material.

Lima, Soares, and Souza (2019) state that “the quality of the transition to higher education depends both on the psychosocial development of students and on the provision of

support mechanisms by the respective educational institutions.” Thus, the student’s experiences in the university context also involve relational issues and not only curricular ones (Figure 37).

Figura 37. Transition to higher education.



<https://blog.psiquery.com.br/2018/02/22/acom-panhamento-psicopedagogico-ensino-superior/ensino-superior-aluno-psiquery/>

Source: Authors-generated material.

Some SS are more relevant when it comes to research and analysis of groups of university students, such as the ability to speak in public, present academic work and seminars, complain to teachers, and express doubts, that is, the ability to mediate and negotiate between the individuals that make up the group, leading one of the parties to give in for harmony between both (Bolsoni-Silva & Carrara, 2010) (Figure 38).

Figure 38. Essential Social Skills in the university environment.



Source: Authors-generated material.

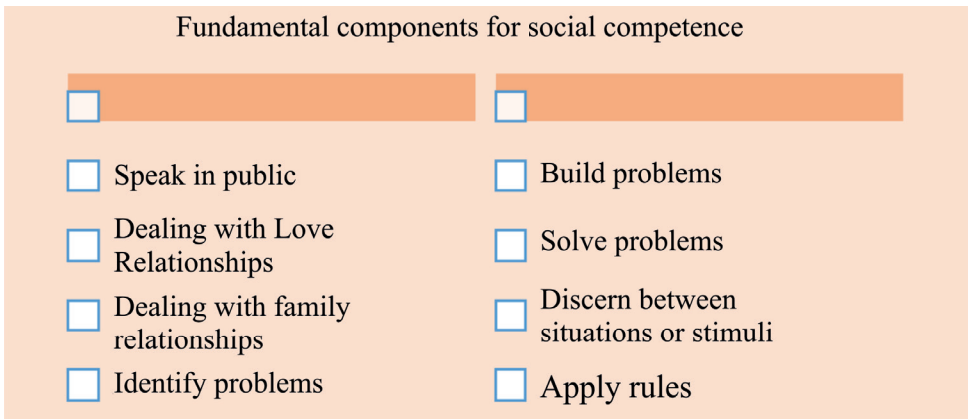
University students constitute a professional class with social interaction as the foundation of their professional performance, the object or goal of that performance. In university academic life, a repertoire of interpersonal skills and public speaking performance can be considered fundamental for individuals' better academic and social performance. In this university context, the need to evaluate social performance has unquestionable social and educational relevance since social and functional impairment in these areas impairs the quality of life of these individuals.

A survey of 223 students at Oxford University, using a questionnaire with thirty social situations, found that 40% of students reported difficulties in dealing with everyday situations, starting a conversation, or going out dancing (Bryant & Trower, 1974 apud Del Prette & Del Prette; Barreto, 2006). According to the data analyzed, it was observed that unsuccessful attempts to insert themselves into social situations could lead to psychosocial disorders and contribute to academic failure and dropout. Once again, an adequate HS

repertoire can result in more success in life for the student, which can mitigate the adverse effects of stressful experiences that may appear.

There are several essential behaviors to assess in the university environment, as per Figure 39, according to Bandeira & Gaglia (2005) and Del Prette et al. (2006)

Figure 39. Fundamental components to evaluate in the university environment.

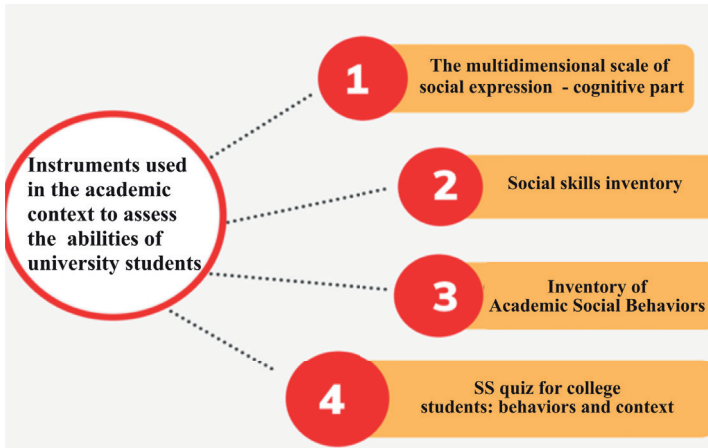


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Instruments measuring SS facilitate the identification of SS difficulties, contributing to academic adaptation and labor market insertion. However, although several types of research show interest in SS of college students, there is a poverty of scales in Brazil, making it necessary to have more instruments to study academic-social behaviors (Soares et al., 2011; Soares et al., 2017).

Here are some examples of instruments used in the academic context to assess the skills of college students (Figure 40):

Figure 40. Instruments used in the academic context to assess the abilities of university students.



Source: Authors-generated material.

The Del-Prette-SSI has had, since its launch, a great acceptance in Brazil, in various contexts, such as academic and professional, probably as a consequence of the lack of such an instrument until then and the increased relevance of the topic “SOCIAL SKILLS” in research questions. This questionnaire has been considered a “gold standard” for evaluating other instruments in Brazil, besides having inspired the elaboration of new tools (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2018).

Soares et al. (2017) analyzed the impact of academic and social behaviors on the SS of 289 college students from public and private institutions through the Social Skills Inventory (SSI) and the Inventory of Academic Social Behaviors (IASB). Students with better-developed SS had better academic and social behavior, being observed greater ability to relate and express themselves in a group, increasing their participation in academic discussions.

Sociometric tests, in general, allow the understanding and objectification of the character of relationships that may the SSI can be represented in a given group, providing an understanding of learning and good group relations. In this

sense, a study conducted with 128 college students used the SSI and a sociometric protocol to assess the predictive power of self-reported SS and peer-reported nonverbal social behaviors. Nonverbal behavior showed more social acceptance and rejection variability than self-report measures. Therefore, there are differences in behaviors that provoke acceptance and minimize rejection in the university educational context (Silva et al., 2017).

It is noted that these SS assessment instruments may help in the perception of the existence or absence of deficits in SS, concluding that there is not a single way to behave, but a diversity of behaviors that may vary according to the person, their beliefs, values and attitudes (Caballo, 2012).

Regarding teachers, the number of studies evaluating the SS of professors is much lower than those of university students. Therefore, initially, it is necessary to emphasize what a teacher’s pedagogical competencies would be, according to Masetto (2003) (Chart 6):

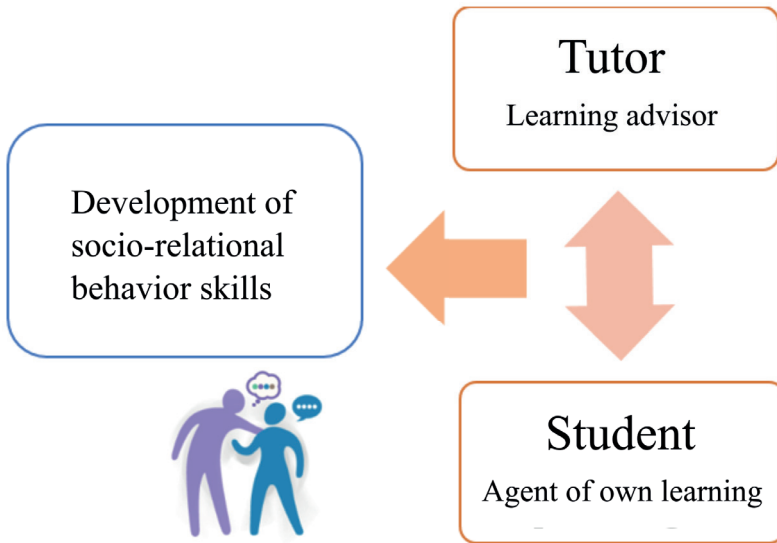
Table 6. Pedagogical competencies of a teacher.

Understanding the teaching and learning process
Have the ability to relate their discipline to the rest of the curriculum and professional practice
Understanding the teacher-student and student-student relationship
Be able to identify, use, and evaluate the effects of different teaching strategies, employing them according to the needs and characteristics of their students and the content being covered.

Source: Authors-generated material.

In active methodologies, the teacher acts as a learning guide and the student as a learning agent of their learning. This way of learning requires the development of socio-relational skills and behaviors. Therefore, competence in establishing relationships with students becomes very important for the teaching practice and the teaching-learning process (Figure 41).

Figure 41. PBL requires the development of socio-relational skills and behaviors.



Source: Authors-generated material.

In the systematic review by Vieira-Santos, Del Prette, and Del Prette (2018), it is emphasized that the teacher-student relationship can have many consequences on the student’s academic life, as described below (Table 7):

Table 7. Consequences of teacher-student interaction on the student’s academic life.

Satisfaction with the university experience and academic adjustment
Impact on university dropout
Student interest and participation in the classroom
Quality of student life
Quality of the teaching-learning process
Incorporation of values essential to ethical professional practice
Increased learning of academic content
Taking advantage of opportunities to engage in research, extension projects and non-academic activities (theater, music, sports)
Orientation to life

Source: Authors-generated material.

This reveals that the importance of HS in teaching has been growing in recent years, but the evaluation of these SS in university teachers is still small. We conclude then that the study of SS makes it possible to identify the need for social skills training programs or interventions (SST). Therefore, evaluating the effectiveness of interventions in this repertoire is important.

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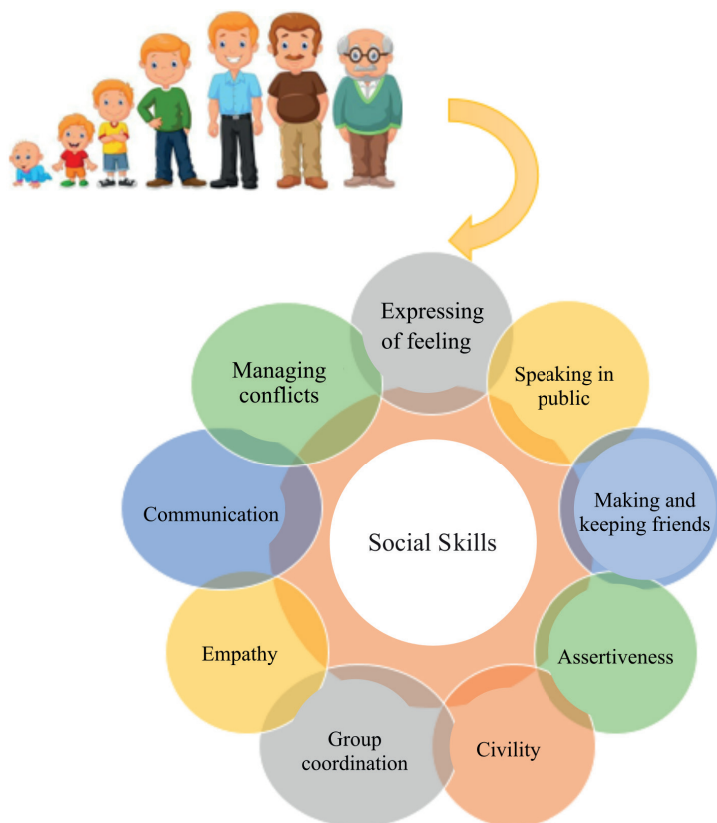
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SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

Daniela Santos, Claudia Oliveira, Louyse Teixeira

Human beings begin to develop SS the moment they are born because, at this moment, they already carry with them an individual behavior linked to heredity. One's behavior can be defined by learning throughout life so that the SS repertoire gets increasingly elaborated during personal development. This learning occurs from social interaction (Figure 42).

Figure 42. Social skills development through life.

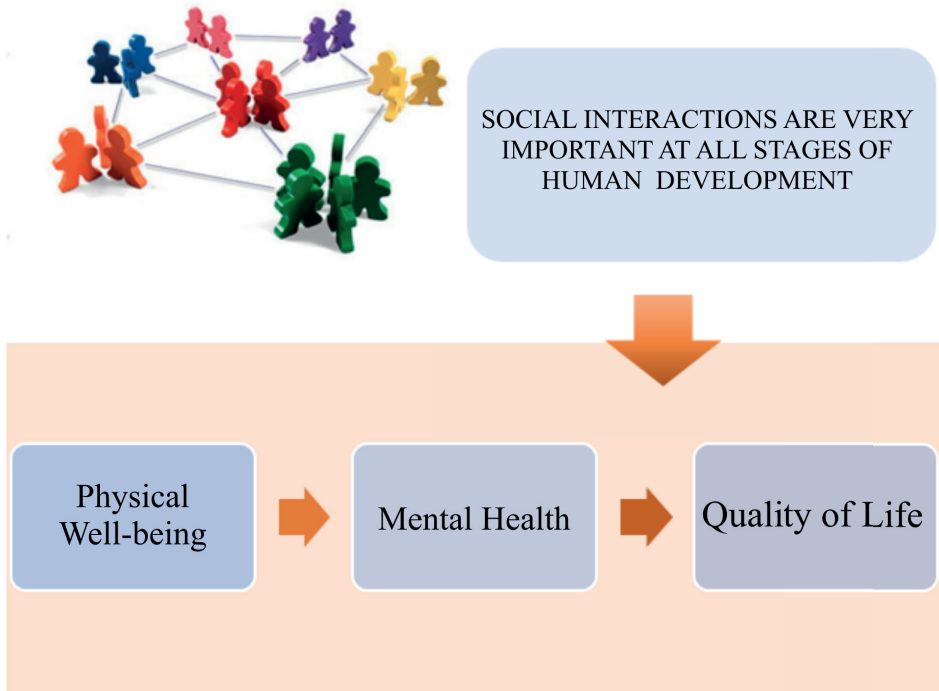


Source: Authors-generated material.

Developing a repertoire of socially competent behaviors

is directly linked to quality of life, physical well-being, and good mental health, meaning that social interactions are significant at all stages of human development (Figure 43).

Figure 43. The role of social interactions in human development.



Source: Authors-generated material.

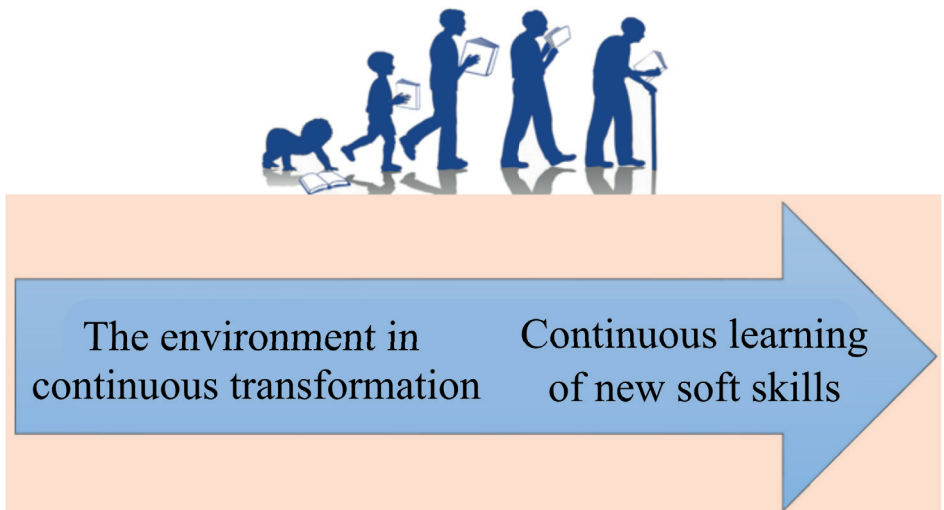
Individuals with good interpersonal relationships tend to be healthier, less prone to disease, and more productive at work. In addition, the socially competent individual is seen as self-reinforcing, with good self-esteem and a good sense of self-efficacy, making it easier for them to deal with adversity and face stressful situations.

SS can be learned in a **non-systematic** way (by interacting with family, friends, study or work colleagues, etc.) and **systematically** (in Social Skills Training programs). The learning of SS happens in family interactions, interactions with

friends, spouses, co-workers, and social media. It is related to observing and perceiving what a particular type of behavior causes to oneself or others, with a tendency to repeat behaviors with satisfactory results and exclude those with unpleasant consequences.

An individual needs to continuously learn new SS, considering that the environment is constantly changing and much of this environment is social (Figure 44).

Figure 44. A Continuous lifelong learning is essential.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Photo available at: <https://geomedi.edu.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/lifelong-learning-1024x378.png>

Although SS is learned throughout life when conditions are not conducive to its acquisition, the process can be recovered through systematic training, structured contexts, and well-conducted group strategies. The theoretical and practical field called “Social Skills Training” (SST) has some basic premises important for understanding and applying its assessment and intervention technologies. Among them, we can mention that SS are learned and include personal, situational, and

cultural dimensions (Del Prette & Del Prette, 1999) and that a good repertoire of social skills does not guarantee a socially competent performance (Bolsoni - Silva, 2002).

Many programs have been structured for various contexts to promote SS learning in a systematized way. Nevertheless, the training of educators in professional SS is indispensable for several factors, according to Del Prette and Del Prette (2006) (Figure 45):

Figure 45. The need for training educators in professional social skills.

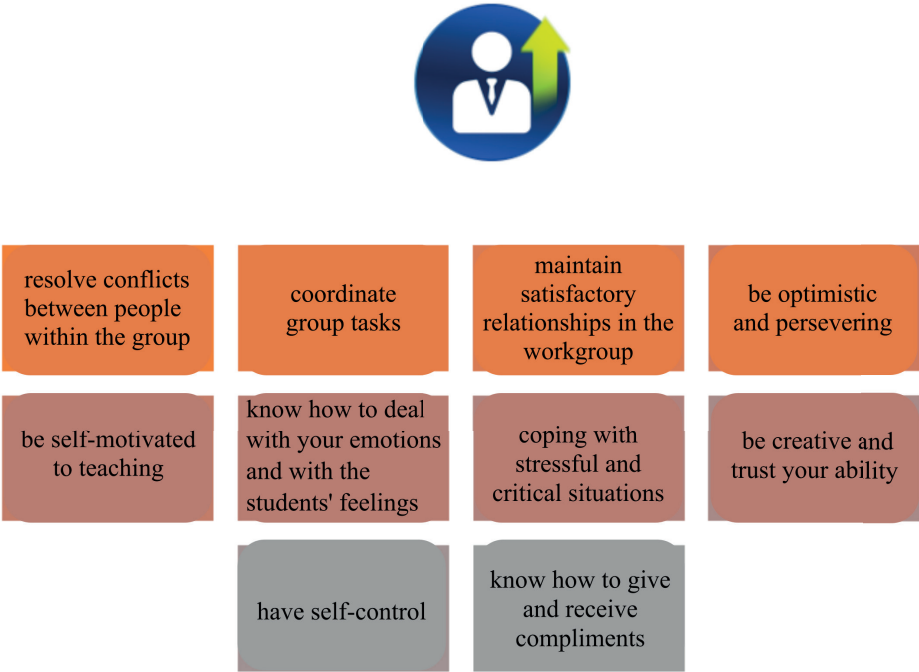


Source: Authors-generated material.

In courses with active learning methodologies like PBL, tutors need to know and develop important skills: resolving conflicts between people and within the group, coordinating

group tasks, maintaining good relationships in the workplace, being optimistic and persevering, being self-motivated for teaching, knowing how to deal with their emotions, with students’ emotions, with stressful situations, and with criticism, being creative, having self-control, being confident in their abilities, knowing how to give and receive praise, among others (Figure 46).

Figure 46. Important Skills for PBL Tutors.



Source: Authors-generated material.

Two sets of competencies are fundamental to the teaching-learning process, according to Del Prette and Del Prette (2013), and are described in Table 8:

Table 8. Core competency set for teaching-learning.

Interpersonal competence		Analytical Skill
Perception of the demands of the school context		Observing, analyzing, and detailing student progress
Flexibility		Relevance of growth in the educational context
Knowledge of the sociocultural level of students		Reflection skills of their pedagogical practices
Use of educational practices that can lead students to solve problems		

Source: Authors-generated material.

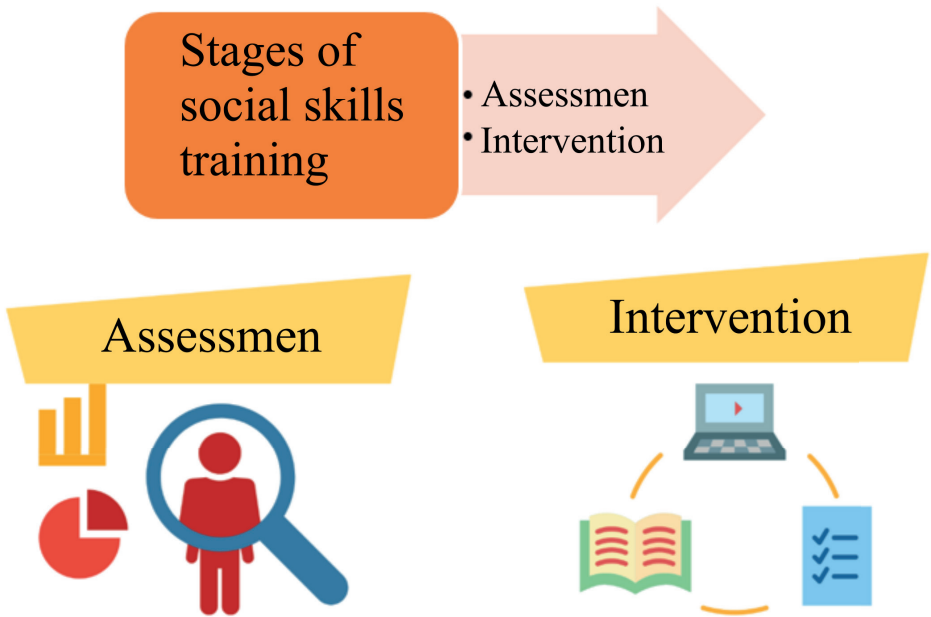
Some of the goals of tutor training are to identify, define, and evaluate SS, helping to develop the individual's ability to relate to others productively and satisfactorily. In addition, training tutors' social and educational skills may allow them to use different performance alternatives to the demands of the classroom, to have the flexibility to change their behaviors in the face of student performance, to discriminate students' progress according to their actual or potential abilities, and to be more creative in classroom educational interactions.

SST can also help improve interpersonal relationships in the work environment. This training should aim to develop the ability to initiate, conduct, and end conversations; to ask and answer questions effectively; to speak in public appropriately; to express love, liking, and affection, as well as annoyance or displeasure; to defend one's rights while maintaining respect for others; to ask for help as well as give support; the wisdom of knowing how to say no; empathy; to praise and accept praise; to express opinions; to apologize or admit ignorance; to change and know how to ask for a change of behavior of others; requesting and providing positive and negative feedback, among other skills. When the professional becomes socially adept (or socially competent), the result will

be more productive, satisfying, and long-lasting personal and professional relationships, as well as physical and mental well-being and good psychological functioning.

In Brazil, there is a predominance of SST programs with a cognitive-behavioral approach, widely described by Del Prette and Del Prette (2011). These programs encompass different models, such as teacher training courses, therapeutic actions, and university and educational programs. SST comprises two stages, not necessarily separate: assessment and intervention (Figure 47).

Figure 47. Stages of Social Skills Training.



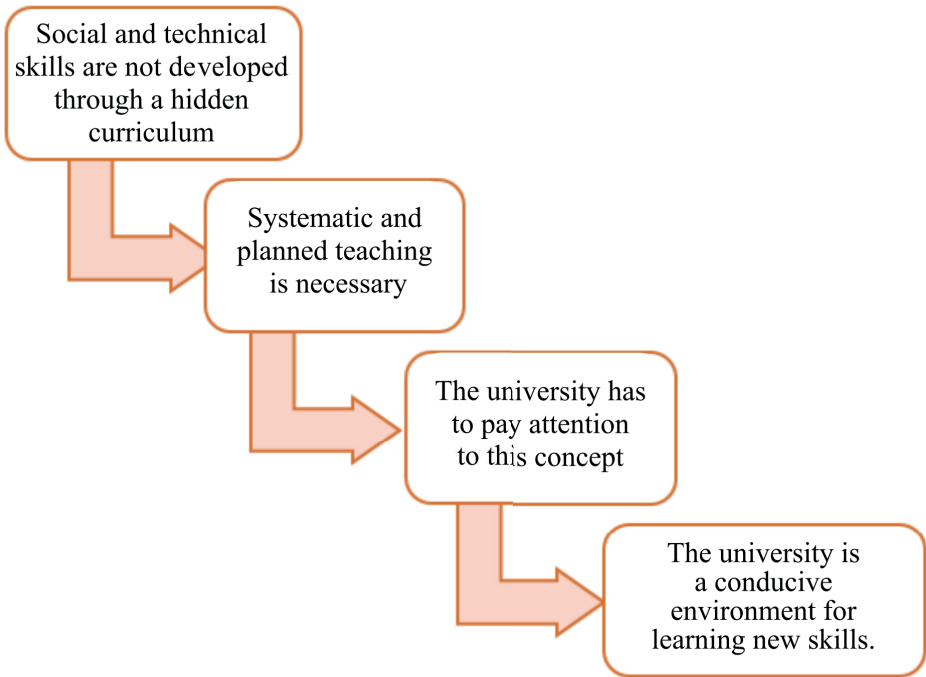
Source: Authors-generated material.

The **evaluation** seeks to identify SS deficits and behavioral excesses, concomitant emotional responses, and distorted beliefs contributing to the absence of socially skilled behaviors. The most commonly used techniques in **intervention** include instruction, behavioral rehearsal, modeling, modeling, verbal and video feedback, homework assignments, cognitive restructuring, problem-solving, and relaxation. For the group interventions, we cite the experiences, which present activities that mobilize feelings, thoughts, and actions to minimize behavioral dysfunctions and maximize SS.

In the context of academic life, there are several difficulties linked to interpersonal relationship skills in students. In this sense, Lima, Soares, and Souza (2019) conducted and evaluated the effectiveness of an SST program with eleven students from public and private institutions of higher education. The authors used the IASB and the SSI and perceived the relationship between SS, academic experiences, and academic and social behaviors. All participants had gains regarding the acquisition of SS, and it was observed that there is a positive associative relationship between these items. The results of this study called attention to the importance of universities having resources to assist students in their various needs, whether in the academic field or interpersonal relationships.

The university environment is suitable for learning new skills since the actors in this environment face unique challenges in their personal and professional lives. However, the university environment cannot expect social and technical competencies to be developed through a hidden curriculum. Thus, there is a need for systematized and planned to teach of these competencies (Figure 48)

Figure 48. The university as a conducive environment for learning new skills.



Source: Authors-generated material.

It is also important to note that SS can undergo interventions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention levels (Table 9). SS development programs are an essential tool at all levels of health care. They help promote mental health since SS is a protective factor for human development.

Regarding SST initiatives in Brazil, considering the importance of SS in the formation of university students, “Professional Interpersonal Development Programs (PRODIP)” were implemented for teachers of Exact Sciences courses, as tested by Del Prette et al. (1999).

Table 9. Types of intervention aimed at social skills.

Types of intervention	Meaning
Primary Prevention	Interventions targeting groups or people exposed to risk factors (contexts not conducive to the development of satisfactory social skills, but not beset by interpersonal problems).
Secondary Prevention	Interventions targeting groups or people exposed to risk factors for interpersonal problems (example: children, adolescents, parents, and adults with interpersonal relationship problems).
Tertiary Prevention	Interventions to reduce the consequences of marked deficits in social skills (example: people with autism or schizophrenia, stuttering, mild mental handicap), with no claim to cure.

Source: Authors-generated material.

PRODIP uses the experiential method. That is, it uses a set of structured activities simulating day-to-day situations of participants' social relationships to demand attention to feelings, thoughts, and actions, aiming to overcome deficiencies and increase SS in group SST programs (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001).

Gorayeb, Cunha Neto, and Bugliani (2003) built a program named "Life Skills with Adolescents and Teachers in a Community in Ribeirão Preto (SP)" to improve skills to deal with risk situations that can lead to drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, traffic violence and death by accident. The program took place with group sessions and weekly meetings, where, through group dynamics, role-plays and other modalities, skills such as problem-solving and decision-making, critical and creative thinking, proper

communication, interpersonal relationships, measures of self-knowledge, putting yourself in the other person's shoes, and dealing with feelings and stress were trained.

An intervention aimed at psychologists and psychology students, who use interpersonal relationships a lot in their work, was carried out by Del Prette, Del Prette, and Barreto (1999), in which 39 students were assigned to the Experimental Group or Control Group participated. Weekly sessions were held to discuss information on how to apply SST and group experiences for anxiety reduction, cognitive restructuring, problem-solving, and improvement of SS commonly needed in personal, group, and professional interactions, in increasing complexity. Qualitative analyses were conducted afterward, revealing the participants' satisfaction with the program's results

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The development of social skills can be trained by human beings, which can facilitate their interaction with others in a social, educational, or professional context and promote greater appreciation and acceptance of the individual. Furthermore, in the teaching environment, a good repertoire of these skills can result in better academic performance and lower stress in the teaching-learning process.

ISBN: 978-65-89839-37-8



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