PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER

EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

University of 8 Mai 1945- Guelma	جامعة 08 ماي1945- قالمة
Faculty of Letters and Language	كلية الاداب و اللغات
Department of Letters and English Language	قسم الاداب و اللغة الانجليزية

Incorporating Soft Skills into EFL Teaching Classes : EFL Teachers' Perspectives,

Department of English, Guelma University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Master's Degree in Language and Culture

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2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this modest work to: my precious parents who instilled in me values and

principles that taught me to be a successful man.

To my brother **Ilyes**, who is my idol.

to my friends who know how to be patient with me and encourage me all the way.

To all my teachers whom I admire, especially **Mrs. CHEKKAT and Mrs.**

TABOUCHE, because their work is very difficult, but they have never stopped

fighting for a fairer world.

To all **my colleagues** with whom I shared the university life.

To **BOUAKKAZ Seyfeddine** who was one of the best friends I have ever had

To all those who have supported and encouraged me in this journey, I express my

deepest gratitude.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this work to my **family, Mrs.IMENE TABOUCHE,** and **myself**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Abstract

The present research aims to explore teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards incorporating soft skills into English as a Foreign Language classes at the Department of English at Guelma University. Developing soft skills in the 21st century is vital in all domains in general and in one's personal and professional lives in particular. Foreign language teaching is among the fields in which soft skills must be recognized, hence, implemented. However, English as foreign language teachers may underestimate the importance of soft skills as a result, they may focus on teaching language skills and neglect teaching soft skills in order to achieve the aforementioned aim. The current study adopted a descriptive quantitative method in which a questionnaire was administered to 25 teachers at the Department of English. The results show that teachers have positive attitudes towards implementing soft skills in their classes and are aware of their importance. However, some of them are not familiar with the concept itself, though teachers are implementing different types of those skills in their teaching practices. In addition, results also show that teachers face different challenges when implementing these skills. Following this, the study suggested some pedagogical implications for teachers and students to successfully implement soft skills in their teaching and learning practices.

   Keywords: EFL teaching, soft skills, EFL teachers' attitudes.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

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ARABIC SUMMARY الملخص

General Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), there is a growing emphasis on developing soft skills alongside linguistic competence. Soft skills, also known as transferable or employability skills encompass diverse abilities that go beyond academic knowledge and technical expertise. These skills, including effective communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability, are recognized as essential for personal and professional success in the 21st century. The integration of soft skills into EFL classes has emerged as a debated topic among teachers and researchers alike. With increasing demand for well-rounded individuals in the global job market, the role of EFL teachers is crucial in preparing their students with these essential abilities. However, the degree to which soft skills are successfully integrated into EFL teaching is still being explored. The attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of teachers about using soft skills in their classrooms can greatly impact the effective incorporation of these skills into language learning.

1. Statement of the Problem

Language teaching in general and EFL teaching in specific is more than just providing students with linguistic knowledge and promoting their language skills. The incorporation of soft skills like communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving is becoming crucial for students' success in both academic and professional lives. However, incorporating these soft skills into EFL classes can be challenging for teachers. In fact , the concept of soft skills may not be common among teachers. Accordingly, it may not be given interest and the importance it

needs. Moreover, even when teachers recognize the need for soft skills, they may face difficulties in finding practical ways to implement them in their classes. Hence, combining language teaching with promoting soft skills can be a hard task. Furthermore, students may lack prior experience with soft skills, making it challenging for teachers to integrate them and make students acquainted with them. In a nutshell, the focus on linguistic competence and other content areas may cause teachers to focus on these areas and neglect the development of soft skills. Hence, if these challenges are not addressed, EFL students may graduate with weak soft skills, which can affect their success in both academic and professional settings.

2. Aims of the Study

The primary aim of the current study is to investigate EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward integrating soft skills into their classes. Specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which teachers are familiar with soft skills, it also tries to investigate the teaching practices used by teachers when implementing soft skills. Besides, it endeavors to reveal the challenges that teachers may face when integrating soft skills into their classes.

3. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

- What are teachers' attitudes towards incorporating soft skills in their EFL classes?

- What are the teaching practices used by teachers to integrate and develop soft skills?

- What are the challenges that teachers may face when incorporating soft skills in their EFL classes?

4. Research Hypothesis

The present research seeks to test the following hypothesis:

H1: teachers have a positive perspective towards incorporating soft skills in EFL classes.

H0: teachers do not have a positive perspective towards incorporating soft skills in EFL classes.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises 25 EFL teachers at the Department of English of the University 8 Mai 1945 Guelma, who taught during the academic year 2023-2024. More precisely, a sample of 25 EFL teachers were randomly chosen to provide insights on their attitudes and approaches concerning the integration of soft skills into their classes.

5.2 Tools of Data Collection

In order to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the integration of soft skills to EFL classes, this study used the descriptive quantitative method. However, one main data-gathering tool, which is a teachers' questionnaire was employed, this latter was distributed to EFL teachers to gain their perspectives on the use of soft skills in their classes. It contains a mix of closed-ended questions using rating scales, yes/no questions, and multiple-choice questions to gather data concerning the topic under

investigation, as well as one open-ended question to provide more details about teachers' experiences and views.

6. Structure of the Research

This research consists of two main chapters, along with a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first chapter is concerned with the theoretical framework, while the second chapter focuses on the practical part and the analysis of the obtained results. The first chapter explores the history, definition, importance, and implementation of soft skills. It provides a thorough understanding of soft skills and the significance they have in various domains such as the workplace, education, and personal development. Additionally, this chapter examines eleven soft skills relevant to EFL learning and approaches related to their development. The second chapter analyzes the research tool, which is a teachers' questionnaire used in the study and presents the findings, along with their interpretation. Finally, the dissertation concludes with the limitations of the research and pedagogical implications.

CHAPTER ONE: Soft Skills

Introduction

In today's globalized world, fluency in English alone is not enough for success in professional life. Employers now are looking for individuals with a broader set of skills, known as "soft skills," which include effective communication, critical thinking, and adaptability. Recognizing this shift, the field of EFL teaching should be adapted to stress the importance of soft skills in preparing students for their academic and professional lives.

This chapter sheds light on the history and importance of soft skills in the workplace. It defines and explores 11 key soft skills relevant to EFL teaching, their significance, and strategies for promoting their development in the classroom. The goal is to guide EFL teachers in effectively incorporating soft skills to provide a better-rounded learning experience.

1.1 Understanding Soft Skills

Soft skills are personality qualities that make someone better at interacting with others, improving job performance, and getting ahead in their career (Parsons, 2008). Unlike hard skills, which are about what someone knows and can do for specific tasks, soft skills are interpersonal and can be used in a variety of different situations (Parsons, 2008). The phrase "soft skill" is like an umbrella term that encompasses important abilities needed in life. It covers areas such as knowing how to interact well with others, being a good team player, and acting professionally at work. Moreover, it also includes personality traits like being friendly and easy to work with (Hyder et al., 2020). Additionally, Matteson et al. (2016) refer to soft skills as tools the individual can use in any job, in other words, they are the interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities crucial for success in the workplace. They are not about knowing how to use a machine or software, but about how you understand and communicate with people,

solve problems, and deal with stress (Martins et al., 2020). For example, being good at listening and understanding others, being an effective communicator, being creative, fixing problems, collaborating with colleagues, and managing your own emotions and stress levels in the workplace (Dell'Aquila et al., 2017).In essence, these are characteristics and abilities that help individuals to land and keep a job (Matteson et al., 2016).

Likewise, Kumar et al (2022) describe soft skills as tools that help individuals build and establish good interpersonal connections with others. They facilitate adaptation to changes as individuals grow older, gain more experience in life, and work in different jobs. For example, both a professor and an investment manager may exhibit good communication and leadership skills, although they show it differently in their respective professions. Regardless of the person's career path. These skills are not only helpful but indispensable for thriving at work. (Kaplan, 2023)

1.2 Historical Background

The term soft skills has its origin in the efforts of the United States military in the mid-20th century to measure and standardize job performance. The phrase soft skills was first used by psychologist Paul G. Whitmore, who was employed by the U.S. Army in the late 1960s to distinguish it from hard skills which are tactical and concrete skills (*The Origin of Soft Skills, n.d.*).

Whitmore created protocols for soft skills that mainly impact people such as communication, strategic thinking, leadership, and administration (*The Origin of Soft Skills, n.d.*). Though the US Army teachers were proficient at teaching soldiers how to operate machinery, the military understood the value of soft skills in winning the war (*The Origin of Soft Skills, n.d.*).

The military held a "Soft Skills Training Conference" in 1972 to investigate how a systems engineering approach might be used to design and scale soft skills training since the concepts of hard and soft skills had acquired considerable momentum by then (*The Origin of Soft Skills, n.d.*). The conference attendees, however, quickly came to the conclusion that the terms Soft Skill and Hard Skill should be discontinued or deemphasized because it was difficult to come up with practical definitions. Additionally, they were not exclusive, and there was a chance of confusion (Goulet,2023).

The terms "technical" and "non-technical" were used as synonyms for hard and soft skills in government reports by the 1980s (Goulet,2023). The continued use of the term soft skills suggests that this terminology had already become deeply rooted in the culture. The term remained popular because it provided a way to refer to soft skills without being too precise or detailed (Goulet, 2023). This lack of clarity has contributed to the term's enduring appeal, particularly in engineering education. A recent push has been made to include soft skills, now commonly known as "professional skills" or "baseline skills," into industry practices and curricula, despite the reality that early educational and professional standards in computer science and software engineering largely ignored their importance (Goulet,2023). This change is a result of industry demands for graduates who are well-rounded and possess both technical and interpersonal skills, as well as an understanding that collaboration, empathy, and communication skills are just as important for software development success as technical knowledge (Goulet,2023).

1.3 Categorizing Soft Skills

Many researchers have suggested different ways to categorize the many soft skills important for learning. According to Whitehurst (2016), Soft skills can be divided into four main groups:

- Social skills: are about how individuals get along with others, like being friendly and helpful.

- Self-management: is about controlling oneself, like managing one's emotions and paying attention.

- Academic soft skills: help us with school work, such as working on our own and following instructions. Approaches to learning are our attitudes toward learning, like enjoying challenges and feeling confident.

- Approaches to learning: are the individuals' attitudes toward learning, like enjoying challenges and feeling confident.

These categorizations help individuals understand the important soft skills that students need in a learning setting and professional life.

The following table demonstrates how soft skills are categorized into eight groups based on their nature and application in professional and personal workplaces. This table serves as a framework to understand the different types of soft skills and their examples to be applied

Table 1.1

Categorizing Soft Skills

Categories	Examples	References
Qualifies and Values	Adaptability, flexibility, responsibility, courtesy, integrity, professionalism, and effectiveness, and values such as trustworthiness and work ethic	Ballesteros-Sánchez et al.,2017; Robles,2012;Touloumakos, 2011; Wats and Wats,2009
Volitions, predispositions, Attitudes	Good attitude, willingness to learn, learning to support learning of other skills, being hardworking, working under pressure or uncertainty	Andrews and Higson, 2008; Cinque, 2018 Stasz, 2001; Stasz et al., 2007
Methodological Skills	Problem-solving,decision-making analytical-thinking/thinking-skills, creativity/innovation,manipulation of knowledge, critical judgment	Cimatti, 2016; Succi, 2019; Succi and Canovi, 2019; Thompson, 2019
Leadership-skills and management skills	Self-awareness,managing oneself/coping skills	Ballesteros-Sánchez et al., 2017; Cimatti, 2016; Cinque, 2018; Crosbie, 2005; Lazarus, 2013; Thompson, 2019
Interpersonal Skills	Social skills, team-skills,effective and productive, interpersonal interactions	Bancino and Zevalkink, 2007; Kantrowitz, 2005; Succi and Canovi, 2019; Thompson, 2019
Communication Skills	Negotiation, conflict resolution, persuasion skills, and open-mindedness	Bancino and Zevalkink, 2007; Cinque, 2018; Majid et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010;Robles,2012;Stevenson and Starkweather, 2010; Succi and Canovi, 2019; Wats and Wats, 2009
Articulation Works	Orchestrating simultaneous interactions with people, information, and technology	Hampson et al., 2009; Hampson and Junor, 2005

Emotional Labor	Empathy, particularly for in-service jobs	Hochschild,1983

Source: Adapted from Toulomakos, (2020, p. 4).

1.4 Soft Skills in the Workplace

Soft skills are interpersonal skills crucial for success in a workplace. They include effective communication with customers and colleagues, collaboration within teams, flexibility, and learning technical skills quickly. Moreover, tough competition means that having soft skills is recognized as a valuable asset for employees (Cobo, 2013). Sparks and Waits (2011) suggest that universities should teach students not just knowledge, but also practical skills needed for jobs. Additionally, they highlight skills like thinking critically, solving problems, and being creative and innovative as crucial for graduates. However, enhancing soft skills can be a hard task because they are not as clear-cut as hard skills.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to spot the already-acquired soft skills and the times they have been demonstrated. This way, one can work on strengthening them more effectively (Nd, 2023). Furthermore, according to Khanam and Khanam (2017), while hard skills may secure employment, soft skills can open many other doors and opportunities. Consequently, someone lacking these skills, might not succeed in their job for a long time, which results in unemployment (Feffer, 2016). Accordingly, the growth and success of any industry or organization depends a lot on how good its people are at Soft Skills. (Gavin, 2019).

1.5. Soft Skills in EFL Context

The following titles define soft skills.

a- Effective Communication and Active Listening

Teachers use effective communication to interact with students and get involved in their sessions. According to Argyle, (1972), effective communication is the transmission of a clear message that should be understood by the students. It is the act of transmitting an idea to the target student by using verbal and non-verbal communication,(Criper & Widdowson, 1975).On the other hand, Mahdi, (2015) argues that effective communication is for learners to communicate in class without anxiety in front of their peers.

However, active listening is another skill that helps maintain this relationship between teachers and learners. Tennant (2005), defines active listening as paying attention to students' questions, concerns, and feedback. Furthermore, other researchers (Gordon, 1975, Rogers,1951,1959), give another definition to active listening which is "a non-directive communication technique that demonstrates understanding via (non-) verbal responses, such as back-channeling" (as cited in Jäckel et al., 2024, p.1). Additionally, Rodat (2019), points out that this skill denotes giving the full attention of teachers to their students using verbal and non-verbal communication.

b- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Researchers define critical thinking in many ways; however, most definitions share specific features. For instance, Ennis (1985) and Norris (1985) characterize it as a reflective and reasonable process of rationally deciding what to believe or do. Paul (1991) offers a more thorough explanation by describing it as an intellectually disciplined process that involves actively conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating data obtained from observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, and communication. Later on, Ennis (1995) improves his definition by highlighting reasonably reflective thought aimed at determining beliefs or actions.

Critical thinking is a thought process intended to reach judgments only after evaluating all relevant alternatives, arguments, and evidence related to an issue. (Hatcher, 2000).

On the other hand, Hobri et al., (2018), define problem-solving as a complex skill that requires a lot of effort to achieve specific objectives. It requires; language, emotions, and motivation to solve students' problems, Caprioara (2015). Furthermore, Raven (2000) gives another definition for problem solving, he points out that it is a sort of feeling when teachers are involved in a problem that their students are facing; trying to analyze its nature to solve it. He also argues that teachers can "modify their behavior and launch a further round of experimental interactions with the environment." (as cited in Danesh & Nourdad, 2017, p.235). It is worth noting that this skill requires teachers' intelligence and creativity to solve students' problems, (Shaftel & Shaftel's,1967).

c- Collaboration or Team- work

Integrating collaboration or teamwork has a huge advantage in learning a foreign language. Ashman and Terwel, (2008), define it as making small groups of learners trying to resolve exercises, do activities, or involve in debates. In other words, it is "the activity of working together towards a common goal", (Hesse et al., 2015, p.38) Nevertheless, collaboration or team-work is described as a philosophy of interaction when working with peers during activities or debates, Annett, (1997).

d- Empathy and Patience

Empathy in the medical world; means trying hard to understand what a patient is going through without letting one's feelings interfere. It is like putting oneself in the

patient's place to grasp his experiences better. Feeling is not just basic; it is a high-level skill that takes a lot of mental effort. (Dohrenwend, 2018).

However, in the academic context, being empathetic is a critical trait of teachers, it is about how much teachers try to understand their students' personal lives and feelings, care about how they are doing emotionally, and show that they care through their actions. It's not just something teachers either have or do not have; it is rather more like a scale of how much teachers care about the students. Some teachers are better at it than others are, and sometimes it's easier for them to understand and care about certain students or situations than others (Meyers et al, 2019).

As far as patience is concerned, it is about staying calm with students while teaching the target language, (Person, et.al 2009; Vezzuto, 2004). Hence, patience relates to the capacity of teachers to manage their emotions while teaching English. More precisely, it is about giving students enough time to think and speak without interruptions, (Kim & Kim, 2017; Hiver et al., 2021).

e- Adaptability and Creativity

Creativity, in the academic context, has four main components: (1) being able to create, (2) wanting to create, (3) the situation or context where creativity happens, and (4) making something new and useful (Walia, 2019). Moreover, creativity means coming up with new and unique ways to get things done that work and give you the outcome you want (Cropley, 2019). Furthermore, Pugliese(2016) states a similar definition, asserting that "an idea, in our field, an exercise, or a task, an activity, must be new and useful, in order to be called 'creative'" (p.19).

Adaptability is an important skill for instructors and learners. On the one hand, it is the flexibility to adjust teaching methods based on students' needs and learning styles, (Zhang et al., 2020 and Stockinger et al., 2021). Teachers are required to changes, and

new situations in the classes and make appropriate modifications to lesson plans, (Bernard et al. 2009; Schmid et al. 2014). On the other hand, adaptability for learners entails getting to challenges, managing stress, and interacting effectively when using language, (Dörnyei ,1998).

f- Cultural Awareness

Generally speaking, cultural awareness means understanding how culture influences human behavior for example: communication patterns, what humans eat, and professional practices (*Evolve Communities, 2023*). That is, it is about realizing that people from different backgrounds might do things differently and respecting those differences. (*Evolve Communities, 2023*).

However, in the EFL context, cultural awareness means knowing and respecting the differences between the culture of the language that the students learn and their own culture, for example, beliefs, values, and customs. It is also about understanding how language and culture are connected, and that language is not just about words - rather tied to the culture it comes from. (Yeganeh&Raeesi, 2015).

g- Time Management

The concept of time management is Complex and often misunderstood. "Conceptually, time management is a set of habits or learnable behaviors that may be acquired through increased knowledge, training, or deliberate practice" (MacCann et al., 2012, p. 619). However, the concept of time management can be a bit misleading. We cannot control time itself because it is something we cannot touch or change. In reality, we can control how we use our time. Time management is monitoring and managing how we spend our time (Eilam&Aharon, 2003). In other words, time management is when an individual plans, organizes, controls, and keeps an eye on

how well an individual uses his time to optimize productivity. It is about making sure you handle time well because it is an important resource for getting work done efficiently (Ika Sandra et al., 2013).

1.6 Practical Use of Soft Skills in Classes

The following titles explain how soft skills are applied.

a- Effective Communication and Active Listening

Effective communication comes in three stages: code switching, comprehension check, and repetition. First, Chloros, (2009) explains that code switching is a strategy used in teaching when facing difficulties to explain to students' ideas, points of view, or examples. What teachers need to do is switch from English to their native language to interact with their students during the course. Second, a comprehension check is when teachers within a communication class try to interact with learners to ensure their understanding but at the same time maintain distance, Al-Gharaibeh and Al-Jamal (2016). In other words, it is considered as a strategy to check both students' interaction and understanding. Finally, the last strategy used by EFL teachers to enhance effective communication is repetition. Whatever time it takes, the instructors must tell their learners to repeat the answer even if it is wrong because they learn from their mistakes after trying repeatedly.

On the other hand, teachers use many strategies to apply active listening in EFL classes. Some of these strategies include: paying attention, deferring judgments, and providing feedback.

For paying attention, Halliday (1978), explains it when the learner is talking, the teacher must focus and listen to the student or look at him, it is better to put aside thoughts that may distract the listener and feel him lost for lack of focus. Another

thing that may distract the instructor is listening to side conversations. (as cited in Rusadze, 2021).

According to Diamantidou (2014), providing feedback is a strategy used by teachers to express their opinions or feelings about what students say. While the learner is speaking, the teacher may ask him questions like what do you mean? This question is considered a form of feedback proving also that the instructor interacts with the student, (as cited in Chatzinikola, 2021).

Finally, Rothwell (2010), explains another strategy, which is deferring judgments. This latter entails not interrupting the speaker while talking, because he may feel frustrated and hence may lead to message misunderstanding.

b- Critical thinking and Problem Solving

Applying critical thinking is a hard task nowadays since students are exposed to a lot of information on the internet (Klimova, 2013). Paul and Elder (2007) argue that the traditional method of teaching, known as the product approach, is criticized because it does not fully prepare university graduates for dealing with real-world problems. This is because students are expected to develop critical thinking skills mainly by reading books, taking notes during lectures, and receiving handouts, which is not ideal at all. Encouraging students to think critically is important for teachers. One way to do this is by using short stories and asking students to think deeply about them by asking questions and forming opinions (Boumediene, 2018). Some teachers also use clear teaching models, like the one by Ramdiah and Corebima ,(2014), which has four parts: teaching students how to think critically, teaching specific skills, giving them structure, and helping them monitor their thinking. In an English as a Second Language (ESL) context, Junco, (2011) suggests a five-step process: first,

learn about the topic, then understand the main ideas, next, think about how the text is structured, then decide if the structure makes sense, and finally, write about it.

On the other hand, there are strategies that teachers can integrate problem-solving in their classes. Stice (1982), in his research, devises a strategy which is called "McMaster Problem Solving". This strategy is student centered; it comes in the form of pair or group-works where learners may identify their needs when analyzing, solving and understanding problems together.

Nowadays, the use of devices or technology helps teachers to increase students' motivation in writing. Wahyudin et al., (2023), explain this strategy teachers can provide online applications for learners such as "Instagram or Facebook" to write familiar conversations with peers rather than writing on papers.

Additionally, Luoma (2004) adds another strategy while solving the problem of speaking fluency of students. According to him, teachers have two approaches to follow which are observational and structured approaches. The former is a method that is concerned with observing or looking at the students' debates, while the latter tries to create a debate, solve students' problems and teachers evaluate learners' performance.

c- Collaboration or Team-Work

There are two strategies to apply collaboration or teamwork in classrooms to facilitate students' learning of the target language, pair work and group activities. Pair work is any form of pupil interaction without the intervention of the teacher" (Phipps, 1999, p.1). He explains that this strategy permits students to feel more comfortable while working in groups. Furthermore, in Westbrook (2011), EFL students enjoy interacting and correcting mistakes with their rather than with teachers, (as cited in Achmad, & Yusuf, 2014).

In group activities, teachers give tasks and activities to their learners to enhance their English. Group activities in EFL classes, debates, and presentations, are effective in collaborative learning. Through debates, students engage in discussions and improve their communication and critical thinking skills, Richard ,(1990).

d- Empathy and Patience

Teachers can develop students' empathy by teaching them to accept different points of view (Conyers & Wilson, 2017). Another way of developing empathy is to use literature. Reading books with diverse characters and backgrounds can help English learners understand and care about others. Some stories have characters that learners might not like at first, like in "Things Fall Apart.", stories, like "Annie John," show the learners that even though they come from different places, they can still feel the same emotions. In addition, when learners read poems that do not have clear endings, it makes them see things differently. Overall, reading different kinds of books helps learners see the world through other people's eyes, understand different cultures, and become better at caring for others who are different from them (Gil, 2017).

As far as patience is concerned, Hashemi, (2011) advocates that patient teachers offer more examples and practices as required, without getting frustrated. This relaxed style helps English language development. As it can reduce anxiety, and increase students' motivation and confidence. In this regard, Hashemi, (2011) argues that patience "empowers student-focused instruction and ideal conditions for learning" (as cited in Ghasemi and Hashemi 2011., p.15).

Additionally, patient teachers give sufficient time after asking students to formulate responses without interruption. This prevents learners from feeling rushed or anxious, Lee ,(2019). Moreover, patient instructors slowdown the speed of speech

and provide enough repetition and paraphrases when presenting complex information to students, (Brown, 2020).

e- Adaptability and Creativity

Adaptable EFL teachers have many strategies to apply adaptability in classes; this includes Adapting instruction, adopting new developments, and continuing professional development.

For adapting instruction, Chen, (2016), says that EFL teachers need to change their teaching methods to help learners learn English better; this may consider students' learning styles, educational backgrounds, and language barriers. For example, some students prefer to learn the target language visually and others auditory, in this case, what should teachers do is adjust their teaching and provide activities that can suit the learners' style.

Adopting new developments is another strategy used by teachers, Smith, and Brown, (2019), state that this strategy allows instructors to update lessons, that is in order to increase student participation and teachers adopt innovative methods and keep up with the current teaching practices. By doing this, teachers ensure that their instruction is both effective and relevant to their students.

The last strategy is continuous professional development, teachers keep learning from their experiences. They look for new ideas and ways to have better teaching. They get information from different places like workshops, online courses, or from other teachers. Their goal is to improve their teaching skills and adapt to changes in education (Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009).

However, for Creativity, Making classrooms creative means involving strategies that aid students' self-expression and help teachers be more creative. To begin with,

Torrance (1977) says it is crucial for teachers to create an appropriate atmosphere for students where they can express themselves freely without fear.

Additionally, Florida (2004) believes that creative learners need a situation where it is acceptable to share their thoughts without feeling judged. According to him being respectful of what students think is a key to a learning environment focused on creative thinking.

Another way of fostering creativity for students is participating in reading and writing activities, which help develop creativity, critical thinking, memorization, curiosity, and freedom of expression. (Reyhani and Maghsoudi, 2014).
After reading and discussing, Anh Le (2015) proposes that students write in a journal about what they think, or relate it to their own life (personal experiences), and finally analyze similar work, act up this work in classroom plays, or make up their poems.
As for teacher creativity, Csikszentmihalyi (2013), describes five steps to achieve it. Firstly, preparation involves gathering information and developing a deeper understanding of the context. Secondly, during the incubation period, the teacher takes a break from consciously thinking about the problem, allows his subconscious to process it, and makes connections. Next, the insight phase occurs when a brilliant idea or solution suddenly emerges in his conscious mind – it is like uncovering the missing piece of the puzzle. After that, in the evaluation step, he decides if his idea is effective and useful by thinking about whether it truly helps accomplish his intended objective. Finally, during the elaboration stage, the teacher puts his idea into action by working hard to refine it until he is satisfied with the ultimate result.

f- Cultural Awareness

Encouraging the development of cultural awareness is an important aspect of teaching EFL. The slice-of-life technique (first suggested by Taylor in 1972; also

referred to by Chastain 1988: 309-10, Stern 1992: 224) is a strategy where the teacher chooses a small segment of everyday life from a different cultural context and shares it with students at the beginning of class. This could be something like playing a song or showing a news clip related to the lesson. In fact, creating an atmosphere that encourages openness and receptivity towards learning about cultures other than one's own is crucial. Furthermore, cultural awareness can improve learning and ease cross-cultural comparisons when subjects are presented in the context of both the target and local cultures (Çakır, 2006). Teachers can start conversations on similarities and differences between cultures, and stress how important it is to recognize and value cultural variety (Çakır, 2006).

Beresova (2015), argues that the incorporation of authentic materials into English language teaching, for example, newspapers, videos, or conversations with native speakers, helps learners understand different cultures better. This fits with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) principles, which are about making people aware of different cultures when they learn a language. Therefore, using authentic materials from the language, they are learning or from around the world helps learners connect with those cultures and indulge in them. The technique offers the advantage of grabbing students' attention and stimulating their interest without taking up too much class time. As Chastain puts it: "The point is made with a minimum of comment and a maximum of dispatch" (Chastain, 1988, p.311)." Ultimately employing such techniques in the EFL classroom facilitates cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among students.

g-Time Management

Effective time management involves various techniques and strategies recommended by professionals. Experts like Morris (2001), Jonson (2002), Hellsten and Rogers (2009), as well as Hellsten (2012), suggest that good time management involves doing things like figuring out how an individual uses his time, making plans, setting goals, prioritizing, creating schedules, organizing his tasks, and developing better habits for managing his time effectively. Additionally, the Pomodoro Technique, created by Francesco Cirillo, involves splitting work into 25-minute parts, followed by 5-minute breaks. After four parts, the subject takes a longer break. During work time, stay away from things like phones and apps. The main idea for him is to focus on his work for short periods, and he can a timer to execute it. Moreover, teachers can help students manage their time better using the Eisenhower Matrix. Students decide if tasks are urgent and important, and then categorize them accordingly. They tackle urgent and important tasks first, schedule important but not urgent ones, delegate tasks deemed urgent but unimportant, and remove tasks that are not urgent or important (Weller, 2022). In summary, effective time management involves using a range of methods, such as recognizing how time is used and applying tools like the Pomodoro Technique and the Eisenhower Matrix. These approaches are designed to improve productivity and effectiveness.

1.7 Importance of Integrating Soft Skills

a- Effective Communication and Active Listening

Effective communication skill in EFL classes is crucial for helping students get involved with the target language. When teachers and students are connected to each other, "it may increase willingness to get engaged and motivated, thus, it helps learners get better at learning English in class", (Al Hosni 2014, p. 82). Furthermore,

(Roschelle, and Teasley, (1995), explain that effective communication may facilitate collaboration, especially, when students work together to solve problems; for example: tasks or discussions that require active listening, asking questions, and providing feedback to one another.

In addition, effective communication leads for building students' confidence when teachers ask them to speak. Whatever the learners' level, they need to communicate to enhance their communication skills, Thakur (2019). EC also help in developing thinking skill when students evaluate information critically and make informed decisions.

On the other hand, Pangaribuan et al. (2017), point out that active listening emphasizes the need for learners to be fully involved in comprehending the complete message conveyed by instructors, groups, or students. Hedge (2000), active listening is a key tool for teachers to work well together or with others, and succeed in various aspects of life.

b- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Regardless of whether it is taught intentionally or not, everyone agrees on the importance of developing critical thinking skills, as highlighted by Shirkhani and Fahim (2011). Firstly, learners can better evaluate their progress and training when they can think critically. Secondly, critical thinking enriches students' learning experiences and gives language learning a deeper significance. Thirdly, there is a strong connection between critical thinking and student success. That is when EFL learners are motivated and equipped with critical thinking skills, they can become proficient language users.

Brookfield (2005) suggests that education tries to foster critical thinking as a primary goal. Developing critical thinking skills equips students with the ability to navigate ambiguity effectively and adjust to ongoing shifts in social dynamics, cultural norms, and technological advancements.

In other words, critical thinking without a doubt is valuable for various reasons. It enables students to examine an object (fact, person, data), from multiple perspectives. This process. Like an artist, sketching a model from different angles, carefully observing every detail, and uncovering fresh insights with each new viewpoint. (Tatsumi, 2022).

With regard to problem-solving skill, Makhkamova (2017), explains that this skill is important to enhance critical thinking, language, and social skills, she also adds that problem-solving helps students deal with real-life situations. Additionally, Duch et al. (2001), say that problem-solving may help learners develop responsibility and real-world relevance especially when the topics are related to their own lives and interests.

c- Empathy and Patience

Even after forty years, Feshbach and Feshbach (2009) emphasize that teaching kid's empathy is still super important for their academic success and future life achievement. Additionally, Depow et al. (2021) find that when teachers teach empathy in class, it helps students understand and respect differences among individuals. They believe teachers can raise students' awareness of social issues and help them appreciate different backgrounds. Moreover, Krznaric (n.d.) compares empathy education to giving medicine to prevent problems in government budgets and crime. He says that if governments want to make big changes in society, they

should focus on teaching empathy to future generations through schools (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009; Depow et al., 2021; Krznaric, n.d.).

However, the implementation of patience is important for EFL students and teachers to have good language learning and a positive classroom environment. For instance, Researchers like Korkmaz and Yavuz, (2011), explain that patience allows teachers to connect each student's needs; he also adds that patient teachers change the speed and activities to fit how each student learns best. This prevents student worry that can happen when teachers rush or hurry in explanations.

On the other hand, Al-Hoorie (2019), points out that patience is considered as a crucial skill for both teachers and students. Teachers should take into consideration that they should be patient with their learners because being patient is a kind of respect to have good relations.

d- Adaptability and Creativity

Since the start of the 21st century, there has been a big push to promote creative thinking among students, which has become a vital goal in education (Formosa, 2016). In teaching EFL, the focus shifts from not only teaching the basics of language but also nurturing creativity. EFL teachers now have to come up with new teaching methods that do not just focus on giving information but also stimulate the students' brains to think in new ways. When students develop their creative thinking skills, they can understand information in different ways, use what they know in different situations, solve problems, deal with challenges, and enhance language acquisition (Seelig, 2012). Moreover, linguistic creativity and being creative as a learner are really important for how people learn a new language. Ellis, (2016) notes that when learners have fun with language, like playing with words or sentences, it helps them get better at the language. This occurs through activating cognitive processes involved

in the analysis and manipulation of language expressions, such as deletion, addition, substitution, and reorganization, as well as analogical thinking.

Many scholars believe that creativity is innate and that only certain individuals are naturally creative, however, Kaufman and Sternberg (2007), Richards (2007), and Vygotsky (2004) suggest otherwise. They argue that creativity can be taught and developed through education (*NACCCE, 1999*). Furthermore, Torrance and Torrance (1973) even suggest that creativity is something that can be learned. In addition, Richards (2007) emphasizes the importance of education in either enhancing or hindering one's creative potential. Birkmaier (1971) also highlights the impact of educational systems on creativity. Thus, teachers play a crucial role in nurturing students' creative thinking by incorporating creative teaching methods into their classes (Sternberg & Williams, 1996).

Adaptability helps teachers to support changes and adjust their behaviors to their students, VandenBos (2007). For Martin (2015), adaptability is important in "the capacity to adjust one's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to manage changing, new, or uncertain demands" (as cited in Collie & Martin, 2017, p. 355). However, when learners communicate in a new language, they need to adapt to understand and speak the language effectively. (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018). This skill permits teachers to quickly adopt and implement changes ensuring their teaching continues to reflect current best practices (as cited in Kudinova & Arzhadeeva, 2019).

e- Cultural Awareness

Teaching culture does not only involve learning about different cultures but also facilitates language learning itself. Zhang (2007) emphasizes that understanding cross-cultural communication is crucial for laying the foundation for effective communication and harmony in intercultural communication. Moreover, McKay

(2003) states that culture impacts teaching in two main ways. First, it affects how an individual uses language in terms of how one speaks, what words mean, and how one uses them in real situations. Second, it influences the materials teachers use and how we teach them, meaning considering the cultural context of words and teaching methods when deciding what to teach.

Shamail (2015), notes that when students take a liking to the target language culture, it could aid improvement of the language. They become more curious and motivated to learn, which in turn enhances their proficiency in foreign languages.

f- Collaboration or Teamwork

Collaboration or teamwork is important when teachers apply this skill to their learners it may help them to interact, exchange ideas or opinions, and reach some specific outcomes at the end. By applying collaborative activities, students can improve their language skills, and develop critical thinking abilities, (Brown ,1994). Additionally, McDonough, (2004), says that collaborative activities help increase learners' "speaking time and promote autonomy and involvement while they reduce anxiety, and thus boost learners' confidence." (As cited in Villarreal, and Sarratea 2020, p.207). Finally, Collaboration and Teamwork may lead to the improvement of language proficiency for EFL students, also while working together, they can increase all (grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills), Dobao, (2014).

g- Time Management

Effective time management is a crucial skill that has far-reaching benefits. Burrus and colleagues (2013) and Laskey along with Hetzel (2010) point suggest that there is not enough research on how teenagers manage their time. Learning how to manage time well is important because it helps individuals become more productive in both

their professional and personal lives. Moreover, mastering time management promotes a better balance between work and personal life and keeps individuals feeling positive, overall, efficient time management translates to more accomplishments, doing things more efficiently, and having better chances of doing well in one's job or studies. When a subject manages his time effectively, he will have more freedom and feel less stressed. It also means he can focus better, avoid getting distracted, and stop combat procrastination. Chaudhari (2022) notes that using one's time efficiently means maximizing the most of all resources. These resources, like financial assets, equipment, and workforce, are crucial for an effective operation. If a person does not use them wisely, we might face problems in the future. That is why managing our time well is so important it helps us make the best use of everything we have for better results (Ersh, 2023). Simply, effective time management not only enhances productivity but also leads to better resource utilization and overall success.

Conclusion

To conclude, the integration of soft skills into EFL classes is very important; teachers may apply them to help students to be more motivated to learn the target language. However, these skills play an important role not only in their studies but also in their real life. Teachers must apply these skills to have better control over their classes and to build a generation full of willingness and desire to deal with other people.

CHAPTER TWO Field Investigation

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on exploring teacher's perspectives and opinions towards incorporating soft skills in EFL classrooms. It presents and analyzes the results obtained from the data collected from teacher's questionnaires conducted at the Department of English. The findings aligned with the relevant theoretical framework. Furthermore, the analysis provided to answer the research questions and either confirm or refute the proposed research hypothesis. The section concluded by discussing the pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, as well as providing recommendations for future research.

2. Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1 Population and Sampling

The researchers selected a sample of 25 teachers from the Department of Letters and English Language at the University of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma. These 25 teachers, who taught different modules and levels, were chosen from a total population of 50 teachers. The researchers chose a random selection of the sample to gain a better understanding of the topic and to capture different perspectives**.**

2.2 Description of Teachers' Questionnaire.

This questionnaire has been created based on the elements discussed in the theoretical section. It includes 20 questions divided into three sections, each focusing on a different aspect. The questions are structured in a way that progresses from general to specific inquiries. Alongside multiple-choice, yes/no, and Likert scale items, the questionnaire also features an open-ended question, allowing respondents to express their perspectives and share their views freely.

Section One: General Information Q1 to Q4

The opening part of the questionnaire aims to collect general background information from teachers. In question one Q1, teachers were requested to provide details about the duration of their teaching experience at the university. Question two Q2 seeks to gather information about their educational qualifications Question three Q3 is designed to capture their current employment status, such as whether they are a full-time or part-time teacher. Question four Q4 asks about the specific subjects they have taught during the current academic year.

Section two: Teaching in EFL classes Q5 to Q11

The second section is about "Teaching in EFL Classes" it includes seven questions from Q5 to Q11. The Q5 is Yes /No question which investigates whether teachers adopt any method of teaching or not. Q6 is a multiple choice where teachers are asked to choose the method they adopt. The following question Q7 seeks to know whether the module taught determines the teaching method. In the next question Q8, teachers are asked whether or not keep updated with regard to learner-centred methods. The other question Q9 is a multiple choice question, aims at identifying the challenges that teachers face when implementing their teaching methods. In the next questions Q10, teachers are asked if they reflect on their teaching methods. Finally the last question in this section Q11, is a Likert Scale which inquires whether or not teachers ask their students to provide them with feedbacks on their methods.

Section Three: "Soft skills"

The third section is "soft skills" which contains nine questions from Q12 to Q20, Q12 and Q13 are both closed-ended; in the first question teachers are asked if they are familiar with the term "soft skills". Q13 seeks to know if teachers have implemented these skills before in classes. Additionally, Q14 and Q15 are both multiple choice questions. Q14 seeks to know the soft skills implemented by teachers in classes. However, Q15 is about to know which soft skill is the most relevant to EFL classes. Q16 is a Likert-scale this one seeks to know whether teachers agree about giving language skills and soft skills the same importance. Q17 is a multiple choice question which aims to determine teachers' activities used to develop soft skills Q18 permits to know whether students' respond positively to the activities that develop soft skills . Q19 is another multiple choice question, teachers are asked to write the obstacles that they face when integrating these skills. Finally the last question is an open-ended question Q20 where teachers are asked about the benefits of incorporating soft skills into EFL classes.

2.3 Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire

The administration of the questionnaire took place in the second semester just before the exams, it began on May 6th, 2024 at the Department of Letters and English Language-Guelma University. The administration of the questionnaire was one-to-one administration and it was distributed by the researchers themselves to a sample of 25 teachers, all teachers responded to the questionnaire.

2.4 Data Analysis

2.4.1 Analysis of Results and Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question one: How long have you been teaching English?

Table 2.2

Teaching Experience

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 12 years	10	40%
12 years	1	4%
more than 12 years	14	56%
Total	**25**	**100%**

According to the findings presented in Table 2.2, the highest percentage is

56% of the surveyed sample who have more than 12 years of teaching

experience. 40% of the teachers have less than 12 years of experience ranging

from 1 to 11 years. However, only 4% reported precisely 12 years of teaching

experience. These statistics highlight the prevalence of highly experienced

teachers who accumulated a wealth of knowledge and skills over the years.

Question Two: What is your highest degree?

Table 2.3

Teachers' Highest Degree.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
License	0	0%
Master	7	28%
Magister	9	36%
PhD	9	36%
Total	**25**	**100%**

According to the findings in Table 2.3, the highest percentage of the respondents which is (56%) hold a magister degree. Meanwhile, 44% of teachers holding a phD degree may bring the highest level of academic training and expertise to the discussion. They likely base their views on deep subject knowledge and research. These teachers might offer a scholarly perspective on the subject under investigation. Overall, these results give important details about the teachers' qualifications, showing their ability to enhance the investigation of the topic.

Question Three: Employment status

Table 2.4

Teachers' Status

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Full-time teacher	18	72%
Part-time teacher	7	28%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table 2.4, reveals that the majority of teachers 72% are full-time teachers. this finding suggests that these teachers may devote a significant amount of their professional time to the field of education. Hence, Their full-time engagement may result in a deep involvement and broad experience with regard to the process of teaching (methods, techniques, and practices). Conversely, a small proportion of teachers 28% are engaged in part-time teaching. This percentage suggests that few teachers may dedicate their professional time exclusively to teaching. The contrast between full-time and part-time teachers highlights the importance of considering the perspectives and experiences of

both groups when examining teachers' attitudes toward the incorporation of soft skills. The number of full-time subjects implies that their views might carry more weight because they could be deeply involved and have more experience in the field. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the data gathered from part-time teachers, as they may bring different perspectives and insights.

Question Four: Modules taught in the current year?

Table 2.5

Teachers' Module

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Literature	3	12%
Research.M	2	8%
Written.Ex	2	8%
Grammar	2	8%
Linguistics	2	8%
Civilization	2	8%
Oral.Ex	2	8%
Phonetics	1	4%
Teaching.S	1	4%
Reading.S	1	4%
Translation	1	4%
Study Skills	1	4%
CFLT	1	4%
Testing and Ev	1	4%
Algerian Lit	1	4%
Communicatio n	1	4%
Discourse.A	1	4%
Total	**25**	**100%**

As indicated in Table 2.5, the highest percentage is 12% of teachers who teach Literature at the English Department. Besides, 8% of the them are currently teaching the following modules civilization, linguistics, oral expression, Research methodology, written Expression, and Grammar) with a number of two teachers for each one of these modules. However, the lowest percentage is (4%) of teachers teach different modules including (Algerian Literature, Communication, Testing and Evaluation, discourse analyses, CFLT, translation, teaching skills, study skills, phonetics, and reading Skills.

Section Two: Teaching in EFL Classes

Question Five: do you adopt any teaching methods?

Table 2.6

Teachers' Teaching Methods

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	100%
No	0	0%
Total	**25%**	**100%**

The data from Table 2.6, indicates that every questioned teacher 100% confirms his utilization of teaching methods. This unanimous agreement shows teachers' awareness of the importance of employing teaching approaches and methods in their classes. Employing teaching methods is fundamental for effective teaching, as it provides a plan that helps organize and deliver lessons, engage students, and facilitate learning. By adopting teaching methods, teachers demonstrate their professionalism

and their commitment to follow pedagogical strategies rather than improvising. Hence, this may imply that teachers are seeking to implement strategies and techniques that have proven to be effective in enhancing student learning.

Question Six: if yes**,** what teaching methods do you use?

Table 2.7

Types of Teaching Methods

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Eclectic Method	14	56%
Communicative Method	12	48%
Content Based instruction	5	20%
Blended Method	5	20%
Technology Based	3	12%

According to the findings in Table 2.7, 56% of teachers opted for eclectic method. Teachers who chose the eclectic method they probably want to vary techniques because one method may not be appropriate to all teaching situations. Besides 48% of the respondents answered communicative method, those who chose the communicative method , they probably want to focus on creating learners who can communicate and interact effectively as well as prepare them to real-life situations. 20% for content method and blended method. Those who chose the content-based method, want to motivate their students to learn through interesting subject matter, and for blended method, teachers allow their learners to learn at own pace. Besides, 12% of the teachers chose the technology based method, which means that they integrate

technological devices like data shows or use online platforms, to facilitate the teaching teaching-learning process. Hence, it can be said that those teachers are keeping up with the global changes, developments, and advancements.

Question Seven: Does the module that you teach determine you teaching method?

Table 2.8

The Choice of the Module in Relation to the Teaching Method

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	88%
No	3	12%
Total	**25**	**100%**

The data presented in Table 2.8, indicates that 88% of respondents said that the module they teach determines their teaching method. This suggests that the type of the module plays a crucial role in choosing the teaching method that corresponds to it. However, just 12% of teachers said that the module they teach does not determine their teaching method. It can be explained that the module does not really matter to those teachers, hence, they may depend on other factors when deciding on the teaching instruction to be used

Question Eight: Do you keep updated with regard to learner-centered methods and techniques?

Table 2.9

Keeping Updated to Learner-Centered Methods

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	88%
No	3	12%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Based on Table 2.9, the majority of the teachers 88% reported that they do keep updated with learner-centered methods and techniques. This is a positive sign indicating that these teachers are prioritizing continuous professional development. However, there is a small percentage of teachers 12% who responded that they do not keep updated with learner-centered methods and techniques. This set of teachers may be missing valuable opportunities to improve how they teach to meet the needs of their students.

Teachers who keep updated with learner-centered methods and techniques are more likely to be equipped with a lot of strategies and tools to create engaging effective language learning classes. On the other hand, those who fail to stay updated may struggle to implement modern student-centered methods, Which can limit the effectiveness of their teaching.

Question Nine: What are the challenges that you face when implementing your teaching methods?

Table 2.10

Teachers' Challenges when Adopting their Teaching Methods

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Students'reluctance	18	72%
Large classe	11	44%
Syllabus content	8	32%
Failure to use technology	6	24%

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Discrepancy'between students'levels	1	4%
Lack of materials	1	4%

The findings in Table 2.10, show that 72% of teachers chose students' reluctance. This latter could be due to many reasons like lack of motivation and dissatisfaction with the teachers' methods, it could also be lack of interest in the subject matter or unwillingness to participate in class, as they may feel also shy to express themselves in front of their classmates, Besides, 44% teachers chose large class. This may imply that it is difficult for instructors to manage large classes because of noise and distraction. 32% chose syllabus content, teachers may find difficulties when choosing the teaching method that corresponds with the implemented syllabus content. However, a few respondents gave different challenges according to their personal experience. 24% of them chose failure to use technology. This may explain that most of the teachers may not use technology properly or find difficulties in implementing it. 4% mentioned a challenge which is a discrepancy between students' levels; this may explain why students' level differs from one to another. Some students could be dynamic and have a good language proficiency level, whereas other learners could be passive or have low language proficiency. 4% of teachers chose lack of materials, this may be due to lack of resources that are important to complete tasks, and activities in the classes.

Question Ten: Do you reflect on your teaching methods and techniques?

Table 2.11

Teachers' Self-Reflection

Options	Frequency	Percentage

Yes	24	96%
No	1	4%
Total	**25**	**100%**

According to Table 2.11, 96% of the teachers, said they reflect on their

teaching methods, this may explain that those teachers like to improve

themselves in terms of teaching practices and knowledge; adapting to new

changes and developing self-awareness. However, only one teacher said "No"

he does not reflect on his teaching method. In fact, this result may be subject to

many interpretations. This teacher may not be aware of the process of self-

reflection or he is not interested in knowing about it.

Question Eleven: Do you give your students the opportunity to provide you

feedback on your teaching methods?

Table 2.12

Students' Feedbacks on the Teaching Methods

Options	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Always	11	44%
Sometimes	12	48%
Rarely	2	8%
Never	0	0%
Total	**25**	**100%**

As it is obtained from teachers' answers in Table 2.12, 48% of the

respondents proclaimed that they sometimes give opportunities to their learners

to provide them with feedback concerning their teaching methods. Besides, 44%

of them declared that they always ask students for their feedback. Those results

mean that the respondents are taking their students' wants and needs into

consideration in order to develop their teaching methods or adapt them if required. However, only 8% indicated they rarely give students a chance to provide their feedback. This probably means that teachers are sure about their choice regarding teaching practices or they do not trust or rely on students' feedback

Section Three: Soft Skills

Question Twelve: Are you familiar with soft skills?

Table 2.13

Teachers Familiarity with Soft Skills.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	68%
No	5	20%
Not sure	2	8%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table 2.13, reveals important insights regarding teachers' familiarity with soft skills. According to the findings, the majority of teachers (68 %) responded with "yes" indicating that they are familiar with soft skills, this suggests that the concept of soft skills is commonly understood by a significant portion of teachers. Again teachers' familiarity suggests their comprehension which may aid the integration of soft skills into their classes.

Hence, the table indicates that a notable percentage (20 %) of teachers expressed uncertainty about their familiarity with soft skills. This implies that this group of teachers does not have a clear understanding of what soft skills are about, drawing attention to the need for more professional development to enhance their knowledge.

Additionally, the table reveals that a small proportion of teachers 8% admitted that they are not familiar with soft skills. This implies that there is a group of teachers who have limited exposure or understanding of the concept, this group can benefit massively from teacher training and conferences that can introduce them to soft skills and their importance in the educational context. Interestingly, one teacher 4% responded with "sometimes and always," implying that their familiarity with soft skills may be inconsistent.

Overall, while most teachers reported they are familiar with soft skills, the data reveals uncertainty and unfamiliarity among teachers. Accordingly, personalized teacher training can help enhance teacher's understanding and raise awareness of the importance of soft skills in the education context.

Question Thirteen: Have you implemented Soft Skills in your classes before?

Table 2.14

Teachers' Implementation of Soft Skills

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	100%
No	0	0%
Total	**25**	**100%**

The data revealed in Table 2.14, that all teachers 100% implement Soft skills in their classes. This result contradicts the results in question twelve. as some of them declared uncertainty and unfamiliarity with soft skills; however, they integrated them into their classes. In fact, this may be explained that those teachers are not familiar with the concept of "soft skills" itself

Question Fourteen: If yes, what are the soft skills that you have implemented?

Table 2.15

Types of Soft Skills Implemented

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Team-Work or Collaboration	19	76%
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	16	64%
Time Management and Adaptability	7	28%
Creativity and cultural awareness	9	36%
Empathy, Patience Effective communoication and active listening	14	56%
It depends also on the level and content mature	1	4%

The answers demonstrated in Table 2.15, show that 76% of teachers implement teamwork and collaboration in classes. This can be explained that most of them are interested in making students learn English through collaborative exercises. Besides 64%ofteachers implement critical thinking and problem solving this means that those teachers focus on creating self-sufficient learners who can analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and solve problems. Furthermore, 56% of teachers chose empathy, patience, effective communication, and active listening. 36% integrate creativity and cultural awareness, which means that those teachers want their students to be creative. However, 28% of respondents implement time management and adaptability,

Finally, only 4% of instructors said that it depends on them, that is according to students' levels and subject matter to choose the skill that corresponds to them.

Question Fifteen: Which of the following soft skills do you think are more relevant for EFL classes?

Table 2.16

Soft Skills that are relevant in EFL Classes

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Team-Work or Collaboration	17	68%
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	18	72%
Time Management,Creativity and Adaptability	9	36%
Effective communication and Active listening	19	76%
Cultural awareness,Patience and Empathy	10	40%
It depends also on the level and content mature	1	4%

The findings represented in Table 2.16, reveal that 76% of the respondents chose effective communication and active listening as the most relevant soft skills in EFL, highlighting their importance to language learning. Second, in terms of relevance, is critical thinking and problem-solving with 72% of the teachers recognizing its importance in the EFL context. These skills are vital for students to analyze linguistic structures, understand and explain texts, and apply their knowledge to solve real-

world problems, resulting in a deeper understanding and practical use of the language. In third place, is collaboration or teamwork with 68% of the teachers deeming it relevant in EFL classes. Activities that involve collaboration can create opportunities for students to practice their language skills in a natural setting, learn from each other, and develop their interpersonal skills. In fourth place, patience, empathy, and cultural awareness are recognized by 40% of teachers as important in EFL classes. These skills aid in creating a supportive learning environment, where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes, which is essential for language acquisition. Lastly, time management, adaptability, and creativity 36% were considered relevant by a small percentage of teachers; they still play an important role in language learning. Time management can help students organize themselves and meet deadlines, while adaptability and creativity can help build the ability to apply language skills in different situations. Additionally, one teacher, representing 4% of the respondents, wrote that "it depends on cultural awareness, empathy, and patience."

This shows the importance of these skills and their impact on language learning.

Question Sixteen: Do you agree that developing soft skills should be given the same importance as developing language skills?

Table 2.17

Teachers' Opinions about Giving Language and Soft Skills the same Importance

Options	Frequency	Percentage

Strongly agree	12	48%
Agree	12	48%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Not the same importance but some importance Softskills shouldn't be neglected	1	4%
Total	**25**	**100%**

According to Table 2.17, there is an overwhelming agreement among the teachers 48% who agree or strongly agree that developing soft skills should be given the same importance. However, one teacher 4% expressed a different opinion, stating that soft skills should not be on an equal footing as language skills development but should not be neglected entirely.

Overall, the data reveals a strong agreement among teachers on the importance of developing soft skills in EFL classes. This suggests an overwhelming consensus that soft skills development deserves equal emphasis and priority as language skills in the context being discussed highlighting the value recognition of soft skills among teachers. Nevertheless, there is a disagreement on the degree to which soft skills should be prioritized compared to language skills.

Question Seventeen: What are the activities through which you develop your students' soft skills?

Table 2.18

Activities that Teachers Integrate to Develop Students' Soft Skills

Options	Frequency	Percentage

Group projects	15	60%
Role-playing	4	16%
Classroom	21	84%
discussions debates	12	48%
Problem-solving		
tasks		

In Table 2.18, it is shown that classroom discussions and debates 84% are the most commonly used activities by teachers for developing students' soft skills. Discussion and debates can foster effective communication, critical thinking, and public speaking. Furthermore, group projects 60% are employed by a majority of teachers as well these can help build collaboration, teamwork, leadership, and time management. Additionally, nearly half of the teachers use problem-solving tasks 48% which can develop creativity strategic thinking and the ability to work under-pressure. While role-playing 16% seems less common than the other activities, it can be an effective way to build empathy and improvisation.

Question Eighteen: Do your students respond positively to activities that foster the integration of Soft Skills?

Table 2.19

Students' Response to Soft Skills Activities

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	84%
No	4	16%
Total	**25**	**100%**

As indicated in Table 2.19, 84% of the teachers said their students respond positively, however 16% said they do not respond positively. This can be explained that most of the students are interested in the activities assigned by their teachers. However, those who do not answer may mean that they are not motivated or interested.

Question Nineteen: What are the obstacles that you may face when integrating soft skills?

Table 2.20

Teachers' Obstacles when Integrating Soft Skills.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Time constraints	14	56%
Difficulty assessing Soft Skills	11	44%
Students' lack of interest	14	56%
Large classes	10	40%
Lack of autonomy students personal traits	1	4%

Table 2.20, provides valuable insights into the key obstacles that teachers may face when incorporating soft skills into their classes. Among these obstacles, time limitations 56% and managing large class sizes 40% stand out as significant obstacles. managing time effectively as well as managing a crowded classroom can be a daunting task and can make it challenging to incorporate activities that focus on developing soft skills together with language skills. Students' lack of interest 56% is another obstacle reported by the informants. If students are not motivated or do not see the value in developing soft skills it may hinder the incorporation of activities

aimed at developing those skills. Difficulty in assessing soft skills 44% is also a considerable obstacle. Unlike academic skills such as writing and speaking, which can be assessed or evaluated by tests, assessing soft skills such as communication and critical thinking can be more complex. One teacher claimed that personal traits 4% can be an obstacle, implying that students' characteristics may affect the incorporation of soft skills' development activities. The same teacher noted that a lack of autonomy 4% is also an obstacle, indicating that teachers may not have as much flexibility as one might think to integrate soft skills into their teaching.

Overall, key findings suggest that time constraints, large class sizes, students' lack of interest, and assessment difficulties are the key obstacles that teachers face when attempting to integrate soft skills into their EFL classes.

Question Twenty: According to you, what are the benefits of incorporating soft skills into EFL classes?

The question regarding the benefits of incorporating soft skills into EFL classes seeks to explore teachers' perspectives and ideas about the potential advantages that soft skills may have on language learners. Results revealed varying levels of awareness of the importance of soft skills among teachers. Some teachers demonstrated a high level of awareness, where responses emphasize that soft skills facilitate positive interaction, and active and effective communication among students. These abilities are considered essential for language learning, as they allow students to engage in meaningful conversations, express their ideas, and collaborate effectively. Other responses highlight that soft skills help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These skills are vital for students to become active learners analyze the language, and apply the knowledge acquired in real-life situations.

Overall, here are some of the responses from the teachers who showed a high level of awareness; they affirmed as follows:

- soft skills help introverted students to take part in group projects when implementing collaborative learning strategies, for example, they assist these students in practicing the answers to make sure that they are correct before answering the teacher questions as they are shy and prefer to answer questions correctly.

- Soft skills can sharpen our students' critical responses and increase their ability to argue, it fosters cultural awareness and determination, in short, it creates open-minded students who are critical thinkers and whose ability to argue is great.

- Empower students to communicate effectively and enable them to work together and more importantly respect the different opinions and perspectives. It also increases confidence and enhances their emotional and mental well-being.

Other responses indicate that teachers recognize soft skills as important for students' general, personal, and professional development. Responses suggested that these skills help students become more self-reliant, autonomous, and work-ready. They also promote intrinsic motivation, emotional intelligence, and the ability to contribute to sustainable development goals.

Here are some of their responses:

- They encourage students' autonomy and personal involvement in learning, they also foster students' intrinsic motivation and competition.

- To construct sustainable learners and critical thinkers who can contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development, to solve problems and challenges of today's world.

Some responses suggest that incorporating soft skills can lead to better academic achievement and fluency in the target language they are seen as an addition or complement to language learning. Other responses perceived soft skills as a means to encourage active participation in the learning process. However, A few responses mentioned that soft skills can foster cultural awareness and open-mindedness among students.

In a nutshell, teacher responses imply they are well aware of the benefits of incorporating soft skills in EFL classes. These skills are seen as valuable assets for enhancing communication, cognitive abilities, academic performance, learner's self-reliance, and cultural awareness.

2.4.2 Summary of Results and Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire

The General Information section of the teachers' questionnaire provides important details about the respondents. The teachers at the university have varying levels of teaching experience, ranging from those just starting their careers with 1 year of experience 16% to experienced teachers with over 14 years in the field. A majority hold a master's degree 56% or a PhD 44%, indicating advanced training and academic knowledge. Most teachers 87.5% are employed full-time and teach modules such as literature, research methodology, written expression, grammar, and linguistics.

Section two focuses on eliciting data about the teaching methods used in the university. The findings suggest that all teachers 100% use teaching methods, with the eclectic method 52% and communicative method 48% being the most popular

approaches. Content-Based and Blended Methods are also employed by a significant portion. Additionally, the module being taught largely determines the choice of teaching method 88%. Whereas the key challenges faced include: students' reluctance 68%, large class sizes 44%, and syllabus content 32%. However, most teachers reflect on their methods 96% and provide opportunities for students' feedback 92%.

Section three explores teachers' perspectives about incorporating soft skills in EFL classes, the majority of teachers 68% are familiar with the concept, and all teachers 100% reported implementing soft skills in their classes contradicting the previous result which may imply that some teachers are not familiar with the concept itself. Teamwork or collaboration 76%, critical thinking and problem-solving 64%, effective communication, empathy, and patience 56% are the most commonly integrated soft skills. Effective communication, active listening 76%, critical thinking, problem-solving 72%, and collaboration and teamwork 68% are considered the most relevant soft skills to EFL classes. Many teachers agree or strongly agree 48% that developing soft skills should be given equal importance to developing language skills. Classroom discussions, debates 84%, group projects 60%, and problem-solving tasks 48% are common activities used to develop soft skills. Most students 84% responded positively to these activities, although time limitations 56%, student lack of interest 56%, large class sizes 40%, and difficulty in assessing soft skills 44% pose significant challenges. Nonetheless, teachers recognize the benefits of soft skills, including positive interaction, active communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, personal and professional growth, cultural awareness, and open-mindedness.

To conclude, the results show that there is a variety of activities employed indicating that teachers take a well-rounded approach to soft skills development, as

they address different skills through different interactive activities. This multi-activity approach allows the development of critical soft skills along with language learning.

2.5 Pedagogical Implications

This study investigated the integration of soft skills into EFL teaching classes. The findings from the teachers' questionnaires contributed to achieving a set of pedagogical implications that are provided in the following few lines. Here are some implications for teachers and learners.

It is recommended for teachers to make their students aware of the concept of soft skills and its importance. Teachers may provide their learners with practices, and activities that allow them to learn English better. Moreover, instructors have to implement some strategies as; code-switching, role-play and deferring judgment that permit enhancing learners' language skills.

For students, it is recommended to recognize the significance of soft skills to engage in class participation and in real-life situations because wherever they go they need those skills.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that this study is complete, it is important to notice that it faced many challenges and barriers when it was conducted. The following paragraph is about the main obstacles that came across the researchers while conducting this study.

The theoretical part was the most important part in order to understand the concept of soft skills and it was difficult to collect data from books, and articles. However, when it comes to the practical part, it was not as easy as expected. For the questionnaire, some teachers did not have enough time to answer because the distribution was just three days before the exams so they had too much pressure and

most of them answered it but did not bring it back with them which was the cause of time wasting.

2.7 Recommendation for Further Research

Drawing from the researchers' experience in conducting this research, it is well recommended to distribute the questionnaire hand-in-hand to collect data quickly so that teachers can answer it directly. Additionally, it is proposed that future research investigate the use of soft skills through other research tools like observation or an experiment to better understand and gain insight into the study of soft skills and apply them in classes, in case the chance arises to build a better generation, as learners need those skills even in real life and at any workplace.

Conclusion

This practical chapter is based on the description and the analysis of data from teachers' questionnaire. This data-gathering tools helped the researchers to answer the research questions and confirm the hypothesis. Thus, teachers have positive attitudes towards the integration of soft skills in higher education that permits them to have better teaching and learners may enhance their English and may face real life situations.

General Conclusion

This research aimed to explore teachers' attitudes toward the integration of soft skills in EFL classes. The study was divided into two sections: theoretical and practical. On the one hand, the theoretical part consists of the historical background of soft skills, understanding soft skills, and soft skills in the workplace. It also deals with the definition, practical applications in the classroom, and the importance of eleven soft skills relevant to the EFL context. On the other hand, the practical component of the study deals with the field under investigation. A descriptive quantitative method was employed in which a questionnaire was to 25 teachers at the Department of English at 8 Mai 1945 at Guelma University. The analysis and interpretation of this tool were presented in the second chapter. The findings revealed that teachers hold positive attitudes towards the integration of soft skills in EFL classes, and they implement a variety of activities to develop soft skills; however, they face a variety of challenges. Importantly, the research also highlighted that a small portion of teachers implement and develop different kinds of soft skills without fully understanding the concept of soft skills itself. Consequently, the initial hypothesis of this research, suggesting that teachers may have positive attitudes towards the use of soft skills in the EFL context, was confirmed.

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(Appendix)

Integrating Soft Skills into EFL Teaching Classes: Teacher's perspectives and attitudes
Department of English Guelma University

Dear Teachers,

You are kindly invited to answer this questionnaire which takes part of a Master dissertation research in the field of EFL teaching at University of 8 Mai 1945.The study aims to explore teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards incorporating soft skills into EFL classes. Your valuable contribution to this questionnaire is highly appreciated. Please take the time to answer each question thoughtfully, choosing the response that best aligns with your views or providing detailed explanations, and justifications when needed. Rest assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity, and the information you provide will play a crucial role in the successful completion of this research endeavour. Your time and cooperation are invaluable to this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation and support

Mr.**BOUDEMGH BASSIM**

Mr. **BOUAKKAZ SEYFEDDINE**

Department of English

Faculty of Letters and Languages

University 8 Mai1945-Guelma

Section One: General Information
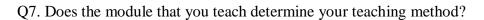
Q1.How long have you been teaching English?

……….Years

Q2.What is your highest degree?

a) License ☐

b) Master ☐

c)Magister ☐

d) PhD ☐

Q3. Employment status :

   a) Full–time teacher ☐

   b) Part-time teacher ☐

Q4. Modules taught in the current year

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Section Two: Teaching in EFL Classes

Q5: Do you adopt any teaching method

Yes ☐

No ☐

Q6. If yes, what teaching method do you adopt

   a) Communicative language teaching ☐

   b) Content-based method ☐

   c) Blended teaching method ☐

   d) Technology based method ☐

e) Eclectic method ☐

f) Others, please specify ☐

Q7. Does the module that you teach determine your teaching method?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Q8. Do you keep updated with regard to learner-centred methods and techniques?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Q9. What are the challenges that you face when implementing your teaching method?

a) Students' reluctance ☐

b) Large classe ☐

c) Syllabus Content ☐

d) Failure to use technology ☐

e) Others, please specify ☐

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Q10. Do you reflect on your teaching methods and techniques ?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Q11 Do you provide opportunities for students to give feedback on your teaching

methods?

a) Always ☐

b) Sometimes ☐

c) Rarely ☐

d) Never ☐

Section three: Soft Skills

Q12 Are you familiar with soft skills?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

c) Not sur ☐

Q13. Have you implemented soft skills in your classes before?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Q14. If yes, what are the soft skills that you have implemented

a) Teamwork and collaboration ☐

b) Critical thinking and problem-solving ☐

c)Time management and adaptability ☐

d) Creativity and cultural awareness ☐

e) Empathy, Effective communication and Active listening ☐

f) Others, please specify ☐

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Q15. Which of the following soft skills do you think are more relevant for EFL

classes?

a) Collaboration and Team work ☐

b) Critical thinking and Problem-solving ☐

c) Time management, Adaptability and Creativity ☐

d) Effective communication and Active listening ☐

e) Cultural awareness, Patience and Empathy ☐

f) Others ☐

Q16. Do you agree that developing soft skills should be given the same importance as developing language skills?

a) Strongly agree ☐

b) Agree ☐

c) Neutral ☐

d) Disagree ☐

e) Strongly disagree ☐

Q17. What are the activities through which you develop your students' soft skills?

a) Group projects ☐

b) Role-playing ☐

c) Classroom discussions and debates ☐

d) Problem-solving tasks ☐

e) Others please specify ☐

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Q18. Do your students respond positively to activities that foster the integration of soft skills?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Q19. What are the obstacles that you may face when integrating soft skills?

a) Time constraints ☐

b) Difficulty assessing soft skills ☐

c) Students' lack of interest ☐

d) Large classes ☐

f) Other, please specify ☐

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Q20 According to you, what are the benefits of incorporating soft skills into EFL

classes

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Thank you for your participation.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وجهات نظر ومعارف المدرسين حول دمج المهارات اللينة في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قالمة. يُعد تطوير المهارات اللينة في القرن الحادي والعشرين أمرًا حيويًا في جميع المجالات بشكل عام، وفي الحياة الشخصية والمهنية بشكل خاص. يعد تعليم اللغات الأجنبية من المجالات التي يجب أن تُعترف فيها بأهمية المهارات اللينة، وبالتالي يجب تنفيذها. ومع ذلك، قد يقلل مدرّسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من أهمية هذه المهارات، مما يؤدي إلى تركيزهم على تدريس مهارات اللغة وإهمال تدريس المهارات اللينة. لتحقيق الهدف المذكور أعلاه، اعتمدت الدراسة الحالية على منهج مدرسا في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن المدرسين لديهم 25وصفي كمي، حيث تم توزيع استبيان على مواقف إيجابية تجاه تنفيذ المهارات الشخصية في دروسهم وهم على دراية بأهميتها. ومع ذلك، فإن بعضهم غير ملمّين بالمفهوم نفسه، على الرغم من أنهم ينفذون أنواعًا مختلفة من هذه المهارات في ممارساتهم التعليمية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أيضًا أن المدرسين يواجهون تحديات مختلفة عند تنفيذ هذه المهارات. بناءً على ذلك، اقترحت الدراسة بعض التوصيات التربوية للمدرسين والطلاب لتنفيذ المهارات اللينة بنجاح في ممارساتهم التعليمية والتعلمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المهارات اللينة، مواقف مدرسواللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Résumé

La présente recherche vise à explorer les perspectives et les attitudes des enseignants concernant l'intégration des compétences générales dans les cours d'anglais langue étrangère au Département d'anglais de l'Université de Guelma. Le développement des compétences générales au 21ème siècle est essentiel dans tous les domaines en général et dans la vie personnelle et professionnelle en particulier. L'enseignement des langues étrangères est l'un des domaines dans lesquels les compétences générales doivent être reconnues et donc mises en œuvre. Cependant, les enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère peuvent sous-estimer l'importance des compétences générales, ce qui fait qu'ils peuvent se concentrer sur l'enseignement des compétences linguistiques et négliger l'enseignement des compétences générales. Pour atteindre l'objectif susmentionné, la présente étude a adopté une méthode quantitative descriptive dans laquelle un questionnaire a été administré à 25 enseignants du Département d'anglais. Les résultats montrent que les enseignants ont des attitudes positives envers la mise en œuvre des compétences générales dans leurs classes et sont conscients de leur importance. Cependant, certains d'entre eux ne sont pas familiers avec le concept lui-même, bien que les enseignants mettent en œuvre différents types de ces compétences dans leurs pratiques d'enseignement. De plus, les résultats montrent également que les enseignants sont confrontés à différents défis lors de la mise en œuvre de ces compétences. Suite à cela, l'étude a suggéré quelques implications pédagogiques pour les enseignants et les étudiants afin de mettre en œuvre avec succès les compétences générales dans leurs pratiques d'enseignement et d'apprentissage.

Mots-clés : enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère, compétences transversales, attitudes des enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère.