



SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SIESSLLD)

TRAINING NOTE (003/2025-26)

On

**Developing Networking Skills
Among Students**

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**SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SIESSLLD),
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Backdrop:

In today's interconnected world, importance of networking cannot be overstated, especially for students. Whether they are looking to land in their first job, secure internship, or simply explore career options, building a strong network can be the key to unlocking numerous opportunities. Networking is not just about making contacts; it is about cultivating relationships that can provide guidance, and access to resources one needs to achieve one's goals.

Importance of Networking:

Networking is a crucial skill for students as it can open doors to a wide array of opportunities. In a competitive job market, having a network of contacts can give them a significant advantage. While academic achievements are important, employers often place a high value on connections and recommendations from trusted sources. By networking, the students are not only increasing their visibility but also gaining access to information and opportunities that may not be publicly available.

Moreover, networking is essential for personal and professional growth. It allows one to learn from experiences of others, gain insights into different career paths, and receive valuable advice. For students, this can be particularly beneficial as it helps to bridge gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications. Networking can also lead to “mentorship opportunities”, where experienced professionals can help the students navigate challenges of starting their journey of career.

Benefits of Networking:

Access to Opportunities: One of the significant benefits of networking is access to job openings, internships, and other career-related opportunities. Many positions are filled through referrals and internal recommendations.

Professional Development: Networking provides opportunities for professional development by allowing the students to connect with individuals who can share their knowledge, experiences, and advice. These connections can help them stay updated on industry trends, develop new skills, and gain insights that are not covered in academic curriculum.

Increased Confidence: Building a network and interacting with professionals can boost the confidence. As one engages in conversations,

asks questions, and shares own experiences, one becomes more comfortable in professional settings. This increased confidence can be invaluable during career-related interactions.

Mentorship: Finding a mentor through networking can be incredibly beneficial for students. A mentor can provide personalized advice and support their career goals.

Long-Term Relationships: Networking is not just about immediate benefits; it is about building long-term relationships. These relationships can evolve over time and continue to provide opportunities throughout one's career.

Strategies for Improving Networking Skills:

Leverage Social Media: Platforms like LinkedIn are powerful tools for networking. Students can always create a professional profile, connect with classmates, professors, and industry professionals, and actively engage with content related to their field. They can also join groups and participate in discussions to increase their visibility.

Attend Networking Events: Students should take advantage of networking events, career fairs, and industry conferences. These events provide opportunities to meet professionals face-to-face, learn about different career paths, and make meaningful connections.

Follow Up: After meeting someone, whether online or in person, there should always be a follow up. Students must learn to send a personalized message to thank them for their time and express interest in staying connected. Building a network requires nurturing relationships.

Be Genuine and Approachable: Authenticity is key when networking. One has to show genuity, be oneself, show genuine interest in others, and be approachable. People are more likely to remember and want to help someone who is sincere and friendly.

Offer Help: Networking is a two-way street. Students should always be open to offering help or sharing resources with others in their network. Whether it is providing information, making an introduction, or simply offering support, being helpful is key.

Role of Academic Institutions:

The academic institutions have an equally important role to play to develop this important trait among students. They should create

opportunities where the students can “learn the techniques” as well as “see opportunities” to network. The word networking here means developing connections with all types of stakeholders including students from other classes / programs / institutions, teachers, corporate professionals, NGOs, and other sections of society.

Some of the strategies the institutions can adopt include:

Workshop on Networking / Personal Branding: This is the starting point and will give an insight as to what are essential tools / requirements for a potential lasting networking. The students should be taught nuances of personal grooming / branding so that they can learn techniques to make good relationships with others. Similarly, the students should be given an exposure as to how to make a good profile on platforms like LinkedIn or make good posting on Instagram, etc. This would help at least those students who are not much conversant with such platforms.

Deputing Students to Networking Events: This is an important area. Usually, institutions send only those students to an event, who are competing in an event; they should also send students to participate in events, workshops, seminars, etc., as participants / observers. This will provide a good opportunity to the participating students to network with peers and others.

Developing Competitive Spirit Among Students: Research has shown that the students who are extrovert and compete in various extracurricular activities are often the better ones in the parlance of networking. The institutions should, therefore, try to develop this crucial “peer competitive spirit” among as many students as possible. The word “competition” is used here in a positive context. For example, it may be made mandatory for students to be part of some committees or the other the institution many have. This is just one suggestive way. Idea is that the institutions should explore innovative ways to motivate students to take an active part in extracurricular activities. This will also help fostering “leadership skills” besides “networking”.

Moving Ahead:

Networking ability is one of the crucial traits to success particularly in the context of modern-day competitive scenario. The students should, therefore, be motivated to learn this competency during their academic days. This would eventually help them in their professional journey.
