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ПРИНЦИПИ ФОРМУВАННЯ SOFT SKILLS У СТУДЕНТІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ: ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ТА ПРАКТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ

У статті описано теоретичний та практичний аспекти основних принципів формування soft skills у студентів ЗВО. Інноваційні процеси відбуваються сьогодні практично у всіх галузях людської діяльності. Зокрема, це стосується і освіти. Щодо професійної освіти — ЗВО має підтримувати інтерес до сучасних технологій, соціально-економічних змін у суспільстві, розвитку нових тенденцій та напрямків. До таких процесів відноситься формування надпрофесійних навичок, тобто soft skills.

У зв'язку з цим для створення умов, що сприяють формуванню soft skills, а також з метою зробити процес навчання більш пізнавальним, авторами статті, був проаналізований процес формування компетенцій soft skills.

Метою статті є теоретичне обґрунтування основних принципів формування компетенцій soft skills. Практична значимість дослідження у тому, що результати можна використовувати у методиці викладання іноземних мов.

Ключові слова: інновації, soft skills, hard skills, компетенції, університет.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOFT SKILLS FORMATION IN STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The article describes theoretical and practical aspects of the basic principles of soft skills formation among students of higher education institutions. Innovative processes are taking place today in almost all areas of human activity. In particular, this applies to education. Regarding professional education, higher education institutions should maintain interest in modern technologies, socio-economic changes in society, development of new trends and directions. Such processes include formation of extra-professional skills, i.e. soft skills. They are not related to a specific profession, but are important for a career and advancement in it. The process of forming such skills can be implemented at English classes.

In this regard, in order to create conditions conducive to the formation of soft skills, as well as to make the learning process more cognitive, the authors of the article analyzed the process of the formation of soft skills competencies.

The purpose of the article is theoretical substantiation of the main principles of soft skills competence formation. The practical significance of the research is that the results can be used in the methodology of teaching foreign languages.

Soft skills are social skills that a person uses to solve various problems: household, work, interpersonal. The basis of this group of skills, which contribute to future competitiveness on the labour market, should be formed at the stage of preparation for adulthood, that is in junior years of higher education.

Despite different approaches to the classification of "soft" skills formulated by scientists, they are based on the following models: communication and interpersonal skills, planning and time management skills, leadership and teamwork, critical thinking and the ability to solve problems. The interactive method was determined to be optimal for the formation of soft skills, because it provides high motivation, development of creative abilities, an active life position, the value of individuality and personal qualities.

We see the prospects for further research of the problem in overcoming difficulties in the process of education, as well as in the application of problem modelling technologies for the formation of soft skills in students' training for direct professional activity.

Keywords: innovations, soft skills, hard skills, competencies, university.

Problem statement and substantiation of its relevance. Due to progressive development of a society, the view on the abilities of a specialist is fundamentally changing. While employers used to pay attention only to technical skills, now they focus on non-cognitive skills. However, insufficient attention is paid to the development of this group of skills. Sometimes teachers aim to make learning effective by formulating the purpose of the course based on the immediate requirement to cover the learning material. As a result, the formation and development of soft skills are sometimes sidelined. Formulating the real purpose of the lesson and effectively modelling the process based on developing soft skills according to the communicative process is not an easy task. This is the reason for the problem of our research, which is insufficient level of soft skills competence formation.

Domestic and foreign literature presents research on the formation of soft skills, but a further detailed study of the problem is needed. Therefore, the development of this scientific material may be useful for scholars and, that determines the relevance of the research.

In modern Ukrainian society, young people should be considered as the most important strategic resource of the country, on which the future and development of most important social sectors depend.

Soft skills, which are considered one of the indicators of the dynamically developing sphere of education, have a special sign among personal qualities of a specialist who is competitive on the labour market. It is the education system that is determined by the most important institution of socialization of an individual. This is the only process in which education and teaching are focused on training educated, erudite, cultured and creatively thinking specialists. Soft skills are "super-professional" skills, without them, it will be difficult for every individual who wants to achieve success in life. Therefore, soft skills begin to be formed at school, and developed at university, in order to ensure competitiveness in the labour market and achieve success in professional activities.

Analysis of latest research and publications. At different times, domestic and foreign scientists have studied the issue of soft skills development. They offer different, but common features of the interpretation of this concept, which is explained by the specificity of

the perception of the term by each of them. By analyzing the interpretations of the term by experts and specialists, the holistic perception of the term soft skills and its meaning will be revealed more precisely.

It is worth saying that "soft skills" is a composite expression, and each word in this phrase explains the key aspects of the concept. The word "skill" means "a particular ability that one develops through training and experience and that is useful in a job" [3]; it highlights a practical function. It has many definitions, but in the term soft skills, the word "skill" should be seen as something more than a technical ability.

American education reformers Claxton R., Costa A. L. and Kallick B. interpret the meaning of the word "skill" as the ability to master hardly controlled actions [4].

American scientists Lippman L. H., Ryberg R., Carney R. and Moore K.A. give the following definition of soft skills: "this is a set of communicative and social skills, character of personality, worldview, way of thinking, professional affiliation, emotional intelligence, in general, a set of those skills that allow people to navigate in society, interact with others and achieve together with hard skills" [5, p. 15]. Experts give a comprehensive definition that includes a set of those models that are basic in a person's life. It is also noted that professional and life success cannot be achieved without hard skills.

The Swedish researcher A. Berglund notes that the following "soft skills" are needed to obtain effective results of an engineer's activity: understanding of professional and ethical responsibility for making engineering decisions; the ability to critically reflect on the decisions made; human resource management and self-organization skills; the ability to assume leadership positions in an interdisciplinary and multicultural team; understanding the importance of lifelong learning; mastering the techniques of argumentation and professional communication; the ability to work in a multidisciplinary team [1, 108].

Among domestic researchers, K. Koval, N. Dluhunovych, Yu. Lavrysh and others paid attention to the issue of the development of "soft skills" among students of Ukrainian educational institutions. Emphasizing the importance of the development of "soft skills" in students, researchers note that in most professional educational institutions

of Ukraine, they mistakenly believe that only academic subjects of a professional direction ensure effective work of a specialist and contribute to his/her career growth [6, 106].

It should be noted that in modern pedagogical science, the terms "skill" and "competence" are most often used as synonyms. Competence refers to a person's ability to solve a certain area of professional tasks. We can safely say that competence is a set of formed skills.

The purpose of the article is theoretical substantiation of the key principles of soft skills formation. Practical significance of the research is that the results can be used in the methodology of teaching foreign languages.

Research methods. The main approach to studying this issue is problem modelling. This approach was used for the purpose of critical analysis of psychological, pedagogical, methodical and philosophical literature on the proposed topic. Auxiliary methods were the method of expert evaluation, the method of object tracking and forecasting.

Main material of the research. The word "soft" means "not hard or firm" [3]. In this case, it is considered that soft skills arose as an opposition to hard skills. If "hard" means "something that is difficult to do or cope with something", then "soft" means "something that does not require effort", thereby denying the significance of these skills [3]. Because of their subjectivity, soft skills are often undervalued, but management consulting experts say they are at the heart of what makes a leader and whether an employee can succeed in a leadership position.

In the scientific field, one of the first mentions of soft skills dates back to 1972. At the CONARC (Continental Army Command) Soft Skills Conference, scientist P. G. Whitmore delivered a report aimed at clarifying how the term "soft skills" is understood in various areas of CONARC. After the scientist's speech, a new definition of "soft skills" was formulated: "Soft skills are defined as important job-related skills that involve little or no interaction with machines and whose application on the job is quite generalized". [10, p. 6]. From that time, the term soft skills began to be used at the official level and many definitions appeared that overlap with the concepts of non-cognitive and social skills, emotional intelligence, etc.

Thus, it is customary to distinguish two types of skills: soft skills and hard skills. Professor Levasseur R. from Walden University in his study "Developing Soft Skills – A Change Management Perspective" believes that hard skills are technical and administrative competences, while soft skills are often used to denote universal competences, which are much more difficult [8]. "Hard" and "soft" skills are usually defined as complementary concepts, which explains how closely related these two opposite types of skills are.

In the scientific field, there are many disputes about the overriding importance of soft skills over hard skills. From the point of view of employment, technical skills are most often the key, because an employee in one or another field must first of all possess professional skills.

Hard skills, or they are also called cognitive skills, are those skills that can be demonstrated, accurately measured and evaluated, for example, the ability to use computer programmes, knowledge of a foreign language, etc. Since these skills are stable, and can be measured and compared with specific algorithms of actions, they are included in the list of requirements set out in job descriptions. Hard skills are easy to observe in everyday life. In the presence of practical classes, a person who learns a skill of the hard skills category is able to bring the acquired skill to automatism and further apply it in everyday practice, following a clearly established sequence of actions or "according to a pattern".

Hard skills are still a fundamental aspect, but soft skills have already caught up with them in importance. Both of these aspects are interrelated: an employee can be organized and responsible, but if, in addition, he does not have special technical skills, he will not be able to fully realize himself.

Soft skills, as multipurpose skills that are significant regardless of the field of activity, are characterized by universality. In connection with the need for a high level of formation of non-specialized skills, various online courses, coaches, consultants, as well as private schools that conduct trainings have already appeared in the education market. In this sense, state educational institutions do not always provide conditions for proper development of universal skills for future specialists, so the course of innovative changes in the field of education is difficult. Graduates in the workplace understand their gaps in certain competencies, so they turn to various specialized organizations of additional education to develop and acquire the level of soft skills that will help them be successful in their activities [2].

The main condition for ensuring integrity during the development of hard and soft skills is knowledge and understanding of tasks and the context of their application. Practice shows that training of information and analytical specialists in various skills, if not based on the achievement of strategic goals and objectives, almost does not lead to the expected changes. Understanding the tasks makes it possible to determine what skills are needed by specialists, what skills can be used during professional activities or which cannot be used.

A 2019 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management found that three-quarters of employers struggle to find graduates with soft skills which their companies need [9]. That is why today the matter of forming these skills is particularly relevant.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in the USA, with the help of HR professionals, have identified eight career-readiness

competencies, the level of which, according to their research, is currently insufficiently developed in university and college graduates:

Career and Self-Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Equity and Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

Leadership

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

Professionalism

Understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

Teamwork

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Technology

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals [11].

Thus, integrating scientific and practical works of scientists, we may state that soft skills are a set of extra-professional skills and personal qualities that determine their success and demand both in life and in education or work. Soft skills are not quantifiable, but they ensure high efficiency and productivity in any industry.

All this contributes to the achievement of the following planned results of educational activities:

1. Personal: professional and life self-determination; meaning making; establishment by students of the importance of the results of their activities and satisfaction of their life interests; mastering the skills of cooperation with peers in the process of language communication and project activities; the need to use a foreign language as a tool of learning in all fields of knowledge.

2. Meta-subjects: use of various resources to achieve set goals and implement activity plans; readiness and ability for independent informational

and cognitive activities; possession of the skills of cognitive and project activity.

3. Subjects: formation of communicative foreign language competence, necessary for successful socialization and self-realization, as a tool of intercultural communication in the modern multicultural world; possession of knowledge about social and cultural specifics of English-speaking countries.

Thus, during the educational process, students will be able to improve and develop the following skills and competencies:

- language knowledge and skills;
- social and cultural competence;
- educational, cognitive and compensatory skills;
- general educational skills and universal methods of activity;
- special learning skills.

Implementation of such competencies in the English language classes is possible in the form of the following components: listening skills, making presentations, persuasion and argumentation, discussion, teamwork, negotiation, writing business letters, self-presentation, public speaking, etc.

Conclusions on the research and prospects for further study. Soft skills are social skills that a person uses to solve various problems: household, work, interpersonal. The basis of this group of skills, which contribute to future competitiveness on the labour market, should be formed at the stage of preparation for adulthood, that is in junior years of higher education.

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