

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE TEACHING AS BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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A change in the nature of economy and society in the conditions of transition to the informational stage of the development of modern civilization has led to the labor market transformation and new requirements to labor force.

The Law of Ukraine "On Education" states that "... the purpose of education is the comprehensive development of a person as a personality and the highest value of society, the development of their talents, mental and physical abilities..." [1].

In recent years researchers admit that teaching of students should be based on developing the fundamental competencies of their professionalism ("hard skills") as well as the "soft skills", which role in the process of professional development of employees and companies substantially increases. Managers strive to hire, retain and promote employees with a high level of development of soft skills.

According to Will Kenton "Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills" [3].

In the 21st century, the contribution of hard skills to the professional success of an employee is only 15%, while soft skills determine the remaining 85% - such are the results of the study done by Harvard University and Stanford Research Institute.

Alison Doyle makes the difference between hard and soft skills noting that "Soft skills are different from hard skills, which are directly relevant to the job to which you are applying. These are often more quantifiable, and easier to learn than soft skills. ... Regardless of the job to which you're applying, you need at least some soft skills. In order to succeed at work, you must get along well with all the people with whom you interact, including managers, co-workers, clients, vendors, customers, and anyone else you communicate with while on the job. These are the types of skills all employers value" [2].

"As employers seek to improve the cultural fit and success of their new hires, we are seeing a shift away from an emphasis on hard skills in favor of a closer focus on soft skills. Hard skills are the technical, specific

abilities which can be taught. Soft skills, on the other hand, are generally more subjective and elusive, referring to personal and interpersonal qualities and characteristics. The advantage with soft skills is that they give employers a deeper insight into their potential hires" [4].

Generally, employers look for applicants not only with work experience, but also with "soft" skills, including six of the most popular ones: flexibility / ability to adapt; communication skills; ability to solve problem situations; creativity; interpersonal skills; ability to work in a team. Traditionally, in psychology, they are referred to as social skills: the ability to persuade, approach people, lead, interpersonal communication, negotiation, teamwork, personal development, time management, erudition, creativity, etc.

Unfortunately, most universities do not pay much attention to the development of students' "soft skills" while curriculum is overloaded with courses that develop students "hard skills". Great changes should be made to focus the subjects on the constant development of transferrable skills necessary for future career and social success.

The part of the academic community considers social and humanitarian disciplines, primarily foreign languages, to be the most effective disciplines for "soft skills" to be formed. Case studies, group projects, imitations and debates are thought to be the most effective teaching methods.

Normally, all students collectively discuss the solution to a major problem, gradually approaching it in small steps. Debates and projects, for instance, contribute to the improvement of such communication skills as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, they simultaneously develop teamwork skills, strategic presentation skills and critical thinking that any future employer will appreciate. Both multimedia projects and Internet technologies for the development of skills also receive comparatively high ratings, reflecting the deeper immersion and diversity of the experience of the younger generation in a digital environment. Thus, teaching methods to a greater extent than the content of training itself affect the development of "soft skills".

It is necessary to mention interactive learning of foreign languages that involves rational use of all possible educational tools (methods, techniques and forms of teaching) in complex. The purpose of such training is to achieve a certain level of foreign language competence, and the ways of its implementation are selected in accordance with the learning objectives, age and individual characteristics of students.

This means that when choosing any interactive method of teaching, the teacher must clearly understand its purpose and present the expected results, taking into account the psychological characteristics of the students

of this group and anticipate how emotionally perceived they will be. If calculated correctly, you can greatly improve the effectiveness of foreign lessons, and in the case of incorrect calculation - lose contact with the audience and impair relationships and learning outcomes.

To conclude, today's labor market requires a person with comprehensive development, which would ensure competitiveness at the very beginning of their professional activity. The importance should be given not only to professional knowledge of a specialist in the field, but also to their ability to respond promptly to market requirements, be constantly engaged in self-education, be able to take responsibility for the results of their own activities. It is soft skills that are significantly important for both work and life, contributing to personal growth, success and goal achievement.

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