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**DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS****РОЗВИТОК СОЦІАЛЬНИХ НАВИЧОК У СТУДЕНТІВ****Ostafiychuk O.D./ Остафійчук О.Д.***English teacher / викладач англійської мови**Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, 68 Desantntkiv, 54000*

**Abstract.** *In this paper we discuss soft skills as a must in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People have to be more flexible, adaptable, lean fast and be motivated. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is very demanding. Educators' task is to teach students how to adapt to conditions of modern life and workplace. While studying students acquire certain soft skills which are necessary to perform effectively academic goals. Then, later in professional life, they will need to learn some more soft skills which will be beneficial for their future careers. There are soft skills that may be equally indispensable both in studies and workplace. Communicating with others, sharing and creating synergy circle empower and cause changes that may lead to unexpected results, e.g. forming a new human with new insights. We become life-long learners and performers of our own ideas which we are responsible for.*

**Key words:** *soft skills, leadership, collaboration, learner, communication, critical thinking, academic environment, workplace.*

**Introduction.**

In modern society great value is given to human's life both personal and professional. It is essential to be a human with a lot of skills both hard and soft ones. Being a part of the society a person feels certain commitment to his family, work and social life. Every day we need to see, read, watch, accept, comprehend, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information coming from all over the world and various fields of human activity.

Communication is a must. It makes people learn and develop. New challenges we face every day make us learn new skills to be able to live in the world and be successful. New skills we need every day are named differently depending on the sphere they may be applied. They transform a person and make one better in some sphere. They may be named 21<sup>st</sup> century skills or life skills. The main idea is that they may be practical. New skills form a new human with a sense of responsibility for his/her own life and for his/her ideas, actions, thrives and thoughts. Nowadays, when the world is constantly changing and working conditions are becoming more demanding, striving for self development has even become a trend. Any human possesses both hard and soft skills. Some of them are more developed, while others are just at their initial stage. Students need to acquire as many skills as possible to become valuable experts in professional life. They should be taught various kinds of skills that will help them meet their needs, ambitions, as well as the employers' requirements. They perceive information faster and understand that possessing only hard skills is not enough.

**The main text** Researchers claim that "soft skills" considered to be significant in studying process are equally influential in the workplace. [3] "Soft skills" in the workplace can play an equally important role in the classroom. Soft skills are defined differently and may have various names including transferrable skills and also 21<sup>st</sup>



century skills. [1] Any name and definition brings understanding of their necessity as the attributes that help people adapt to a new job, overcome certain obstacles, face problems, develop productive ways of communicating with colleagues, supervisors and succeed in the workplace.

A major part of every educator's job is to prepare students for successful careers, turning them into true experts and professionals. In most cases the academic programmes do not include preservice development programmes aimed at improving soft skills employers are seeking for. The number of organizations and requirements is rapidly increasing and they need their employees to be leaders being able to adapt to any changes. This is why soft skills are also known as transferable skills, and they are fundamental features for students to become life-long learners after graduation. [2]

University should be not only a place where students can obtain knowledge, but also some tools to use their knowledge and be resourceful in a social way, to invent ideas and work not just alone in a lab or an office, but be a perspective team player who can adapt to any new requirements. Using and developing soft skills student can now uncover their hidden potential. Educators have to do their best using various techniques and situations to bring those hidden talents to light. Some students are very creative by nature while others may demonstrate excellent organizational skills. All these will be useful in their workplace where this combination of hard and soft skills will help to perform the hardest assignments and become a true professional.

Soft skills are very important for all students that need to develop their potential and see progress in different programs in university. Soft skills are now of high importance and using them properly depends on the context and personal perception. These skills are important for every person in an organization.

Soft skills refer to a collection of personal, positive attributes and competencies that enhance relationships, job performance, and development. These skills mostly influence the way we interact with others. They play a highly important role at working place, in climbing up a career ladder and while building personal relationships.

Soft skills are not easy to observe, quantify or measure. Soft skills are needed for everyday life. Some of soft skills are: communication skills, critical thinking, problem solving skills, creativity, teamwork, negotiating skills, self-management, time management, conflict management, cultural awareness, common knowledge, responsibility, etiquette and good manners, courtesy, self-esteem, sociability, integrity, empathy, work ethic, project management, business management. [4] New academic environment should set a certain set of soft skills that will help a student to achieve success both academically and professionally. This indicates the importance and necessity of acquiring soft skills for the students while studying at universities and good soft skills when they graduate.

Undoubtedly, students of today are the future employers and employees of global business and working market. For students to stand out as promising workers to multinational organizations, they need to invest in the sharpening their soft skills. They will help them greatly contribute in their future abundant resources. So, we can differentiate between soft skills necessary for students in their academic environment



and those for future work. [5]

Soft skills necessary in students' academic environment are as follows:

1. Emotional intelligence. All humans have different experience and the same is with students who can demonstrate different levels both high and low of emotional intelligence. They may even completely lack this ability. This skill tells others about your being a fellow in a company of other students, how sociable, helpful, caring you are to others. It depends on you if you want to be seen as a student easy to work with. Developing this skill will help you develop the sense of your empathy. A student may find himself in a more favourable position while handling interpersonal relationships. This group includes subsets such as collaboration, communication and interpersonal skills

2. Leadership qualities. Though there are born leaders, it is still necessary to develop leadership skill, if not for being a head of the department or a firm. It is vital to be a leader for yourself, the master of your own life. This skill will be very handy under any circumstances. Developing this skill will be twice more important for those who lack their spirit of leadership. It turns into motivation to be able to handle the project or a course paper. One of the parts of a good leader is to follow your principles. Assertiveness will be handy to stand your ground.

3. Motivation. It helps to set a goal, to articulate it and find some ways to accomplish the task. They will see how it is important to set a goal and how proud you may be while achieving it and meeting your needs and ambitions.

Ambitions are like bubbles, but being essential on the way to success they may distract students' attention from real skills such as presentation skills. It is part and parcel of life. We are always asked to share our impressions, opinions and skills in a particular topic. We are encouraged to voice our opinions to a gathering.

4. Thinking skills. Students learn how to use their past experience for achieving results in present in order to comprehend new ways, ideas and material to study. They become willing to learn how it is to think critically. Obtaining this skill gives an image of being able to succeed in their academic and occupational environments. They are not asked to memorize the information for their teachers. On the contrary they are asked to comprehend and analyze the information they are given. However, they may be unwilling to do this at first. Once they understand how everything works it becomes a challenge to see pleasure and benefit in this.

In terms of a workplace we differentiate such soft skills as

1. Collaboration. It is impossible to imagine the modern world without various projects and efficient work in groups and teams. Employers require from their employees to be flexible and be able to collaborate on projects and accept constructive criticism when working with others. A good training of these skills will be an option to complete team-based projects where they have to communicate and collaborate and also contribute to achieve one shared goal.

2. Communication. It is understandable that we all communicate and at first sight it seems there is no need to learn how to communicate. As we may notice the current overusing and prevalence of electronic devices deprive us from everyday live communication. A common complaint from the employers is that young specialists do not always know how to communicate effectively, listen actively,



maintain eye contact and ask questions.

3. Problem-solving. Students in their academic environment and later at workplace face a number of challenges, both expected and unexpected. They have to be able to solve problems using their creativity and an ability being quick to find solutions where there are no ready answers. There is need in trying some training or workshops where they are asked to come to new places and cope with unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations.

4. Time management. Whatever schedule, shifts and tasks a student may have, it is still necessary to manage the time and complete the tasks. No matter how much time a student has, it is of high importance to be able to decide on time and prioritize certain actions. This ability will give an opportunity to manage the time and work on multiple projects in an organized and efficient manner. Practicing this skill at university while studying will be definitely beneficial for efficiency after graduation where abundance of tasks may be too excessive. It will demand from a former student and now a new professional to be ready for multitasking.

All these soft skills will allow a person to become more adaptive to the reality which is changing very fast and find proper solutions to problems. Modern employers claim that nowadays it is possible to take a person with no basic content knowledge who is really curious, has high cognitive ability, willing to learn and demonstrates leadership skills and you may get quite a good worker. Of course, one may mess everything up, but, on the other hand, may also come up with new ideas and solutions. The main idea about this way of teaching others is value. Creative brain is much more valuable than formal education. [4] Grades reflect certain expertise in the skills, but rather hard ones which companies do require. However, it is much appreciated that a person moves on and develops in all fields necessary for living and getting new knowledge and skills including inventive thinking, digital literacy, communication, and flexibility.

It is highlighted that it is valuable to ask questions, be fast to analyze and see connections, draw parallels, think originally, follow leaders, but at the same time one should do it objectively, with cool head, creatively and collaboratively. [5]

New reality rapidly shapes new generation, new skills and new ideas, and the ability to learn and recognize these changes on the fly is a key to success. In this case both students and professionals become self-motivated with great enthusiasm and eagerness to be part of the community and contribute to the mutual well-being.

### **Summary and Conclusions.**

Students will need both in academic and professional environment such skills as:

Learning ability. It is about your ability to use bits of information and make decisions, to learn fast and effectively.

Leadership. It is considered not only in terms of traditional leader, e.g. a president of a department or chess club. You may become a leader but it is much more important to use your leadership skills when the situation requires. It means you are a member of a team and you can lead. If not, step aside and be ready to let others lead.

Sense of responsibility. When you understand that your decisions can bring a





team to success or vice versa and you can admit that problem solving may require some more help. It is also about being able to learn from others, to accept others' opinions and experience.

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**Анотація.** У цій статті розглядаються нагальні питання актуалізації соціальних навичок у навчанні. XXI століття вимагає від сучасної молоді гнучкого використання своїх здібностей, швидкої адаптації до мінливих умов навчання та робочих процесів. Студенти є майбутніми професіоналами, експертами в певних сферах людської діяльності. Під час навчального процесу студенти опановують та розвивають свої соціальні навички, необхідні перш за все для ефективного навчання. Розвиток соціальних навичок сприяє підготовці студентів до активного розвитку на робочому місці, де мотивація вдвічі більше. Активна позиція і розвиток своїх гнучких навичок дає змогу бути успішними у професійній діяльності. Спілкування з іншими є наразі основним елементом для плідної взаємодії і отримання позитивних результатів. Таким чином навчання і розвиток соціальних навичок впливає на формування особистості, яка готова для співпраці з іншими, колаборації, творчого процесу, креативного і критичного мислення і відповідального ставлення до процесів, що супроводжують навчальний і робочий процеси. Цінність для роботодавців складають ті студенти, які готові, незважаючи на брак контекстних знань, бути допитливими і цікавитися процесами для досягнення більшого і пошук нових, більш ефективних рішень.

Навички, які студент потребує для навчання і роботи: вміння навчатися і розвиватися, як особисто, так і професійно, навички лідерства і відчуття відповідальності.

**Ключові слова:** соціальні навички, колаборація, студент, комунікація, критичне мислення, робоче місце, навчальне середовище.

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