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## DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS OF FUTURE PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

*In the professional environment, it is common to divide skills into two types: soft and hard skills. The former help to solve life challenges and interact with other people, while the latter help to achieve the best results in a particular profession. It is emphasized that soft skills are skills that each of us has, but not everyone has reached a high professional level.*

*Soft skills help to solve life problems and work with other people. Not everything always goes smoothly, and a future psychologist must be able to cope with difficulties, take responsibility, and look for solutions. To do this, they need to be able to communicate, defend their ideas, think critically, and work in a team.*

*It has been proven that if students do not have the desire to develop, it will be difficult to improve soft skills and change themselves. Though everyone possesses soft skills, they do not all reach the high level. The main success lies in getting feedback and analyzing the stage they have passed - without all this, it will be extremely difficult to move on.*

*It has been found that customer focus, project management, mentoring, non-violent communication, decision-making, problem solving, emotional intelligence, learning ability, working under uncertainty, lean manufacturing, ecological thinking, self-reflection are effective methods of developing soft skills.*

*The article describes the specifics of developing students' soft skills who are future psychologists.*

**Keywords:** developing, soft skills, future psychologists, educational process.

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## **ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РОЗВИТКУ SOFT SKILLS В МАЙБУТНІХ ПСИХОЛОГІВ В ОСВІТНЬОМУ ПРОЦЕСІ**

*В професійному середовищі зазвичай поділяють навички на два типи: м'які та тверді навички. Перші допомагають вирішувати життєві виклики та взаємодіяти з різними людьми, а інші допомагають досягти найкращих результатів у певній професії. В статті наголошується, що м'які навички – це навички, що є в кожного з нас, але не кожен досяг високого професійного рівня.*

*Визначено, що м'які навички допомагають вирішувати життєві проблеми та працювати з іншими людьми. Не завжди все йде добре, і майбутній психолог повинен вміти справлятися з труднощами, брати на себе відповідальність і шукати рішення. Для цього йому потрібно вміти спілкуватися, відстоювати свої ідеї, критично мислити та працювати в команді. Розвивати м'які навички означає регулярно швидко пізнавати себе, навіть якщо не виходить ідеально. Це постійний експеримент, заснований на спробах і помилках: учасник дізнається щось нове, застосовує це і робить висновки.*

*Доведено, що якщо у студентів немає бажання розвиватися, їм буде складно. Основний успіх полягає в одержанні зворотного зв'язку та аналізі пройденого етапу – без усього цього буде вкрай складно рухатися далі.*

*З'ясовано, що ефективними методами розвитку м'яких навичок є клієнтоорієнтованість, управління проектами, менторство, ненасильницьке спілкування, прийняття рішень, вирішення проблем, емоційний інтелект, здатність до навчання, робота в умовах невизначеності, оцядливе виробництво, екологічне мислення, саморефлексія.*

*Розроблено рекомендації для опанування м'якими навичками студентами – майбутніми психологами, зокрема:*

*1. Одержувати зворотній зв'язок від свого викладача або клієнта. При цьому ініціатива має виходити від вас самих. Зрештою, запитати «чи все я зробив правильно» не так вже й складно, і прийняти висловлені зауваження, якщо вони є, також не складно.*

*2. Спробувати себе в ролі волонтера. Навчитися працювати в команді складно тільки зі статей. Практика набагато важливіша. Щоб навчитися працювати в команді, можна піти в похід з іншими людьми або зайнятися груповими видами спорту.*

*3. Почати працювати з професійним коучем, тренером, який знає різні методи особистісного зростання і швидко допоможе обрати той, який підходить саме вам. Якщо такої можливості поки немає, то звертатися до досвідчених фахівців-психологів або хоча б просто спостерігати за тим, як вони поведуться в різних ситуаціях.*

*4. Відвідувати курси, тренінги та конференції, пам'ятаючи, що після будь-якого навчання нові знання необхідно використовувати на практиці. Наприклад, бізнес-консультант з Німеччини Бодо Шефер стверджує, що це потрібно зробити протягом сімдесяти двох годин після одержаних знань, інакше навичка не сформується. Для того, щоб вона стала частиною особистості, потрібно повторювати все на практиці не менше ніж двадцять один день впродовж року.*

5. Самоосвіта є прослуховуванням підкастів, заняття спортом, читання блогів і книжок. В життєвих історіях можна побачити чужі помилки та одержати цінні інструменти. Серед простих вправ, до прикладу, навчитися уважно вислухати іншу людину, а потім записати те, що вона сказала, або готувати різні відповіді на одну й ту саму тему, або підготувати різні відповіді на одні й ті самі запитання.

В статті розглянуто особливості розвитку м'яких навичок у студентів – майбутніх психологів.

**Ключові слова:** розвиток, soft skills, майбутні психологи, навчальний процес.

### **Formulation of the problem**

In professional environment, it is customary to divide skills into two types – soft skills and hard skills. The first help solve life problems and interact with other people, while the others allow to get the best results in a particular profession.

You need to have several soft skills to be successful. For example, every specialist needs to be able to get along with colleagues, clients, managers, superiors, and one cannot deal without these skills. They cannot be acquired at school, university or courses; they develop throughout life from the moment we are born.

### **Analysis of research and publications**

Among the foreign authors who have gained recognition through the publication of the results of empirical studies of soft skills and their interpretation from the point of view of significance in professional achievements are B. Abbott, A. Nielson, K. Lorenz, S. Maloney, M. Andrews. In the sphere of domestic scientific research, there is also a noticeable increase of interest in soft skills development in connection to various aspects of professional training, as evidenced by the works of O. Vasylenko, O. Kirdan, K. Koval, S. Nakhod, T. Smagina, O. Shunevych.

### **Formulating the objectives of the article**

The article describes the specifics of developing the soft skills of students who are future ppsychologists.

### **The presentation of the main research material with full justification of the obtained scientific results**

Soft skills are related to the level of emotional intelligence and are highly valued by employers. Even at the job interview, HR professionals pay attention to the ability to build communication, persuade, and negotiate.

According to statistics from Harvard and Stanford, 85% of success in the profession is ensured by soft skills and only 15% is due to hard skills. Based on this data alone, we can already say that soft skills are indispensable and need to be constantly improved [1].

Soft skills are tools and technologies that help you to be productive and successful in various fields. They are independent of cultural and linguistic contexts and are essential for professional development as well as in everyday life for personal success.

The term «soft skills» comes from the English language and the word «soft» means «changeable and programmable». Soft skills are also often called «flexible skills» [3].

Soft skills are skills that mostly help in interacting with people. Therefore, we take a closer look at them.

Communication is indispensable today: the ability to communicate with people is the key to success in any career. It allows you to find contacts not only to meet human needs, but also to fulfill professional tasks. This skill will be relevant for a long time, so you need to develop it in the first place. It includes two important definitions:

- Business communication is the ability to correspond and negotiate with colleagues, clients, and managers.

- Presentation and public speaking is the ability to clearly and understandably express your thoughts and convey them to other people [2].

Critical thinking is the ability to take a balanced approach to processing and assimilating information. There is a lot of information around us, but it is very important to be able to organize the knowledge we receive, check facts, identify relationships between facts, think rationally and form strong arguments that can support a particular point of view.

Customer focus is the ability to recognize the needs of the target group in a timely manner and meet them with optimal efficiency.

Project management tends to have wide social and business application. Any project encompasses clients, assistants, etc. However, no matter how many people are involved in a project, there is always a person who manages everything. He or she is in touch with all project participants and the result depends on him or her.

To develop this skill, it is recommended to organize all current affairs in the form of projects. If a person tries to divide their current work into goals, deadlines, and milestones, this will stimulate work on the project.

Mentoring constitutes a synergistic learning relationship between a mentor and a mentee, wherein the mentor imparts their extensive knowledge, refined skills, and invaluable experience to facilitate the mentee's advancement.

Non-violent communication is a special method that involves clear and meaningful communication to the interlocutor. It involves telling the other person about your observation, backing it up with facts, telling them about your needs, and formulating a request. This skill is useful for

negotiating in group meetings, personal communication with colleagues and loved ones.

The development of non-violent communication starts with self-awareness and empathy for others. It is also worth regularly attending trainings and lectures where people learn how to communicate in a completely calm, non-violent manner.

Decision-making is an important skill that allows you to choose the best possible solution. It helps you achieve your goals faster, for example, if you are given a choice of two jobs that interest you, then without the ability to choose, you may lose both options. You need to learn how to make decisions by considering as many options as possible, prioritizing them, and choosing the best one.

Problem-solving is similar to project management skill, but a problem with a goal and an expected result is used as a project. Developing this skill may seem difficult, but it is effective and really useful: you need to try to find or invent a dozen tasks from your life and find a rational solution for them. Set a timeframe within which the problem should be completed. The most important thing is that as a result, the problem disappears completely.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand your emotions, motivations, your own intentions, and the intentions of others. This skill allows you to make decisions and communicate with people. To improve your emotional intelligence, you should try to develop more empathy for yourself and others, notice people's emotions and analyze what they are connected to and how they affect others [6].

The ability to learn is the ability to assimilate new information and apply it in life to solve various problems. It is an important skill that allows you to manage your knowledge and helps you choose the right sources of information.

Developing this skill starts with making a learning plan and filtering the necessary information. It is important to choose the knowledge that you want to apply, and you need to test the theories and concepts and analyze the result.

Adaptability means being able to respond quickly to challenges, make decisions, manage projects and resources. It allows you to work well in a competitive market. One of the concepts stress management. This is the management of state and behavior during periods of tight deadlines, force majeure, heavy workloads, etc.

Adaptability is development of independence. A person has to try to come up with different ways out of situations, use approaches that they have

not used before. They need to add new tools to their life, follow trends and technologies, and choose what works for them.

Lean manufacturing is about solving problems of any kind, finding bottlenecks, and improving the process of creating something. With this skill, you can save resources, for example, if you are constantly exhausted, you can calculate your workload, so you can work more efficiently and not get tired.

Lean manufacturing involves the use of 5S technology, which, in turn, involves eliminating unnecessary things from life, self-organization, maintaining cleanliness, standardizing processes, and restoring order.

Ecological thinking is the ability to relate to existing events without harming oneself or the environment. It allows you to immerse yourself in your work and enjoy its results.

Introspection is the analysis of your actions, behavior, and activities. It helps you evaluate your actions and understand what to do next. For example, you work in a team, but you cannot find a common language with your colleagues. Through self-reflection, you can find your mistakes in interacting with your colleagues. This skill is also often referred to as mindfulness because it helps you understand yourself better and realize your needs [7].

In the process of developing self-reflection, you should regularly observe yourself: note the nuances of your behavior and actions. You can, for example, keep a diary and record what happened during the day, what emotions you experienced, what feelings you had. You can also write down those people to whom you are grateful for their presence in your life. There is an opinion that it is impossible to learn flexible skills: either a person has them or not. This statement is controversial. Of course, an introvert is unlikely to ever become an extrovert. But you can learn to show your strengths and hide your weaknesses.

To develop soft skills, people need to master the following:

1. Receive feedback from their teacher or client. The initiative for this should come from them. After all, asking «Have I done everything correctly?» is not so difficult. And accepting the comments made, if any, is also not difficult.

2. People should try the experience of being a volunteer. Learning to work in a team is difficult only from articles. Practice is much more important. To learn how to work in a team, you can go hiking with other people or do group sports.

3. Start working with a professional coach, a trainer who knows various methods of personal growth and will quickly help you choose the one that is right for you. If this is not yet possible, then contact experienced psychologists or at least just watch how they behave in different situations.

4. Attend courses, trainings, and conferences and remember that after any training, new knowledge must be put into practice. For example, Bodo Schaefer, a business consultant from Germany, says that this should be done within 72 hours of gaining knowledge. Otherwise, the skill will not be formed. And in order for it to become a part of the personality, you need to repeat everything in practice for at least 21 days during the year.

5. Self-education is listening to podcasts, playing sports, reading blogs and books. You can see other people's mistakes and get valuable tools from life stories. Some simple exercises include, for example, listening carefully to another person and then writing down what they said, or preparing different answers to the same topic. Another exercise is to prepare different answers to the same questions [7].

Most people are well aware of their strengths and weaknesses. But if in doubt, they can take professional tests used by HR managers. For example:

The Big Five Test will help them identify the so-called «Big Five» personality traits. In particular, friendliness, stress tolerance, hot temper, anxiety, and even conscientiousness [5].

MMPI-2 test («Minnesota Multidimensional Personality Inventory») allows people to determine their personality type, behavioral and communication style. It also helps to diagnose adaptability and hidden mental disorders, assess professional aptitude, study emotional state etc [4].

At Khmel'nitsky National University we teach not only professional skills, but also develop soft skills. Soft skills help students become the best at what they do. Not just work from 9 to 5, but build a career, launch successful projects, create new meanings. All this is not speculations, but the results of research, most of which one way or another leads to the conclusion that 85% of success in the profession depends on soft skills.

While studying at the university, applicants attend the School of Young Psychologist. During classes, they learn how volunteers improve their flexibility skills. During entertainment and recreation, students practice soft skills.

Future psychologists can also receive psychological counseling and training from the university's Psychological Service and attend hobby groups.

The first week at the university is an adaptation week. In early September, students get to know each other, the values and rules of the university.

The first soft skills development classes are held at meetings with the tutor: here they get to know each other, communicate, learn to talk about themselves and work in a team.

Senior students who lead workshops and represent their department at university events have the opportunity to demonstrate their self-presentation skills and communication competencies at a professional level.

Soft skills allow people to solve life problems and work with different people. Not everything always goes well, and a future psychologist needs to be able to overcome difficulties, take responsibility, and look for solutions. They must be able to communicate, defend their opinions, think critically and work in a team.

From the first days of studying at the university until graduation, teachers make efforts to ensure that students grow as professionals and as individuals.

The terms «soft skills» and «hard skills» emerged in the late 1950s. Intriguingly, there exist two different accounts regarding their origin.

1. Military. During the reform of the US Army, research was carried out on what could be changed in the personnel training system. Scientists have concluded that for the military to work well, it is not enough to limit itself to professional knowledge – «hard skills». Universal skills are also needed. They were designated as «soft skills».

2. Computer. The origin of the phrase might be attributed to the term "software" encompassing all information and programs processed by computers. In contrast, there exists the term «hardware», which refers to physical components such as boards and microcircuits [1].

Research on soft skills began in the 1960-1970s. In 1972, at the CONARC Soft Skills Conference the terms were already used officially.

At first, there was a perception that soft skills were important for managers or executives. But later this restriction was abandoned. After all, soft skills do not speak about a person's knowledge, but about their character and personality. Therefore, for many employers, the ideal candidate is someone who is good at both hard and soft skills.

Notably, British researchers Jane Andrews and Helen Higson observed that for university graduates to secure employment more swiftly, students must cultivate their soft skills. This observation was made in 2008.

In 2016, the recruiting company Robert Half found that 43% of managers attach equal importance to the soft and hard skills of their employees [5].

And the LinkedIn Global Talent Trends study in 2019 found that 8 out of 10 talent managers surveyed pay attention to the personal qualities of the applicant. In their opinion, it is soft skills that allow you to adapt to a new job faster and work better [7].

The main indicator of the success of Khmelnytskyi National University is not the number of students, grades competition winners, but the



number of happy professionals who have found their favorite business and started making money on their knowledge and skills. Improved soft skills are a superpower that allows people to work successfully, find friends and like-minded people, build and launch projects.

It is important to understand that motivation is the basis of everything. If students do not have the desire to develop, it will be difficult for them to improve soft skills and change themselves. The success lies in receiving feedback and analyzing the stage passed. Without it moving forward will be problematic. A person has to try oneself in something new, simultaneously not be afraid to make mistakes.

### **The conclusions and prospects for further research**

Developing soft skills means getting to know yourself regularly and quickly, even if you do not do it perfectly. This is a continuous experiment based on trial and error: a person learns something new, puts it into practice, and draws conclusions.

It is important to understand that motivation is the basis for improvement and promotion. Development of soft skills is a continuous, purposeful process of forming basic and professionally oriented competencies that determine intellectual and professional growth, readiness for adequate actions in emergency situations, formation of the necessary socially and professionally important qualities.

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