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DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

For a modern highly qualified specialist, the availability of so-called “hard skills” and “soft skills” is of key importance. Hard skills are professional skills that can be taught and defined. These skills are taught to students at lectures, tutorials, seminars, courses, etc. In order to acquire hard skills, it is necessary to gain knowledge, learn certain algorithms and instructions. Soft skills are universal competencies that are much more difficult to teach. These are personal qualities depended on a person's character, family upbringing, natural abilities and the ability to communicate and establish relationships, get out of difficult situations and take responsibility for tasks.

An analysis of the scientific sources on the problem of developing soft skills of university students in the process of learning foreign languages proves that despite the fact that soft skills are the key to building a professional career in general, they aren't still considered urgent in the higher education system [1, 3, 4, 6, 7].

Valuable ideas about methods of forming soft skills can be found in English-language popular science articles: in personal blogs of foreign educators or on the websites of educational agencies (e.g., British Council [7; 9]). This proves the relevance and lack of research of this methodological aspect and the importance in self-education and lifelong learning

In our opinion, the teacher should pay a lot of attention to the development of soft skills in all classes at the higher education institution, since they are the prerequisite for successful employment. Today, during the public discussion of educational programs, employers repeatedly emphasize that the ability to work in a team and establish relationships is the primary criterion for a highly qualified specialist. The blog of Ms. Laura Brewer [5], Youth Employment Skills Specialist at the International Labour Organization, highlights the competencies and skills needed to be competitive in today's labour market. The six most important soft skills are flexibility/adaptability; effective communications skills; problem solving; creativity; interpersonal skills; teamwork. Ms. Brewer also gives advice to young people on how to highlight their skills and abilities on a resume without any previous work experience. In this case, the emphasis is on skills. Such a summary is called functional [5].

From our point of view, one of the most effective methodical tools in this context is the project method. In order to implement a complex individual task at the department of foreign and Ukrainian philology of Lutsk National Technical University, students of the 1st-2nd courses of all specialties at the beginning of the semester receive a list of problematic questions, which are communicative topics from the program material. The teacher divides the students into micro-groups of 3-4 people each, appoints a leader and provides the requirements for the project presented with PowerPoint. The project is limited in time and is evaluated according to clearly defined criteria. Students work independently on defining the subject and discuss possible ways

to solve the problem, look for the necessary material, analyse information. To get the maximum score for this type of activity, students of each micro-group must fully reveal their topic with the help of proper lexical content and grammatical literacy. In addition, attention is paid to the structure of the presentation, its delivery, correct pronunciation and pace of speech. Students' good interaction while presenting their work and eye contact with the audience are very important. Their speech should be clear, logical and limited in time. As you can see, the project method will be able to ensure the development of listed above soft skills.

Undoubtedly, direct communicative interaction is the key to developing soft skills. That is why teachers of foreign languages should use in classes the elements of discussion, debates and various interactive techniques such as "Microphone", "Aquarium", "Openwork saw", etc. These methods or techniques, being communicative and problematic in nature, instil skills to cooperate, express themselves correctly, listen intelligently, prove their points, work in a team. The "Microphone" technique gives everyone the opportunity to say something quickly, taking turns answering questions or expressing their opinion. Answers aren't commented or evaluated. It is important when some students are speaking, others cannot interrupt them. "Aquarium" is a method that is effective for developing discussion skills in small groups of 4-6 participants.

Role modelling is the ability to interact in pairs or groups according to a given scenario, where students act playing their specific roles. A stimulating game introduces students to the conditions of certain economic, cultural, social or political processes, procedures, phenomena that are as close to life as possible or otherwise give them certain knowledge. We agree that students' soft skills as well as digital and media literacy will be significantly improved if they are asked to deliver a report or presentation that encourages students to search for information, and critically describe and analyse multiple literary sources [3].

Another effective method that develops soft skills in foreign language classes is debates. It is a structured and specially organized public exchange of opinions between two sides on a current topic. Its main tasks are to learn to analyse the opinions of opponents, to be able to communicate on current topics, to cultivate respect for opposing points of view, to develop oral skills of students' speech. Debate participants learn to defend their opinion, argue it, make logical and meaningful conclusions, search for necessary information and work in a team. This type of educational activity will allow students not only to improve their foreign language skills, but also has an entertaining nature.

The debate will be more successful if it is organized in three stages: preparatory, practical and final. The purpose of the first stage is to expand vocabulary, arm students with language clichés, and learn how to write reports. The topic and purpose of the debate is determined, students review the literature on the topic in search of the necessary information.

The second is the game itself, which has a clear structure and time limit. A specially appointed person monitors the regulations. Students are divided into three teams of three to four people each. The first team proves a certain point of view (thesis), the second refutes and presents counter-arguments (antithesis), the third are judges who analyse the arguments of the teams and decide which of the teams wins. The game has three or four rounds, where one player from each team performs. The first participant

makes an introductory speech on the problem and presents the conceptual apparatus. The second one actually argues, proves the essence of the thesis (antithesis). The third anticipates what the opposing team might say and argues against it. The fourth summarizes the conversation of their team. After each round, a cross-examination of team members is conducted to clarify the point of view of the opponents or to identify shortcomings. Teams have the right to a 5-minute timeout for negotiations with each other, which can be used immediately in full or in parts [2]. The third stage is a discussion of the game with participants and spectators.

However, in our opinion, not only such exercises for the development of oral speech form the best possible soft skills. A. Abbas [4, p. 368–369] proves that the integration of authentic literary and musical works optimally stimulates the skills, develops the emotionality of the participants of the educational process, their creative and critical thinking. In addition to speaking, listening and reading, writing activities, such as writing essays or blog posts, give good results. Students learn to formulate and present an opinion, defend and prove their position. The topics presented for the essay should correspond to current social and moral problems.

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