УДК 378.011.3-051:373.2]:37.015.31 DOI: 10.33989/2226-4051.2022.25.256659 Yuliia Braiilko, Poltava, Ukraine ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5203-7479 Olha Palekha, Poltava, Ukraine ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9894-4944 Oksana Rudych, Poltava, Ukraine ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9203-7262

## PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WHILE TEACHING PHILOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

The article is devoted to the topical issue of primary school teacher training in higher educational institutions. The purpose of the research is to investigate the process of developing primary school teachers' soft skills in the process of teaching philological disciplines.

After a comparative analysis of the definitions of the category 'soft skills' proposed by Ukrainian and foreign researchers, the authors have emphasized that soft skills are especially crucial for primary school teachers. Researchers have noted that to form and develop soft skills effectively during lectures and practical classes it is necessary to use different ways of interaction, namely games, case studies, colloquia, and individual and group projects.

**Keywords:** soft skills, educational process, primary school teacher, higher educational institution, philological disciplines.

Introduction. The New Ukrainian School is a significant reform of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Its primary purpose is to create a school where it will be pleasant to study. In particular, in 2017, a new Law on Education was adopted, which now regulates the basic principles of the new educational system (Закон України «Про вищу освіту», 2017). In 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a new State Standard in Primary Education. The new Standard in Primary Education stipulates that teachers must work in other ways.

The teacher is the person on whom the reform rests. Without a teacher, any changes will be impossible, so one of the main principles of the New Ukrainian School is a motivated teacher. Our goal is to promote their professional and personal growth and raise teachers' social status.

A Ukrainian school will be successful if a successful teacher comes to it. A successful teacher solves various problems regarding the quality of teaching, the amount of homework, communication with children, and school administration. Children should be taught by a person who can be a leader, loves teaching, and does it professionally.

The approval by the Ministry of Social Policy of the professional standard 'Primary school teacher of general secondary educational institution in Ukraine' (2018), developed by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, reflected public attention to primary school and its teachers. This normative document defines the necessary professional competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities of primary school teachers in Ukraine (Професійний стандарт, 2018).

Modern primary school teachers' competitiveness is determined by their professional qualities. It depends on the level of their education and qualifications, practical experience, pedagogical skills, and professionally significant competencies, including professionalpedagogical, socio-civic, cultural, language-communicative, psychologicalfacilitative, informational, entrepreneurial, entrepreneurial-digital. High requirements for the teacher determine the need for lifelong learning and adaptation to the dynamic changes taking place in society and education. In such conditions, the development of future primary school teachers' soft skills is one of the efficient means to improve their competence, in particular while teaching philological disciplines.

The **purpose of the paper** is to investigate the process of primary school teachers' soft skills development while teaching philological disciplines.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Reforming the education content and ensuring its quality requires new approaches to future primary school teacher training. The highly-qualified teacher should organically display professional qualities and hold national and universal values. I. Bekh, N. Bibik, O. Bida, V. Bondar, M. Vashulenko, I. Ziaziun, L. Koval, S. Litvinenko, S. Martynenko, O. Savchenko, L. Khomych, and others considered various aspects of future primary school teacher vocational training in their research.

O. Barynov, N. Zhadko, M. Churkina, A. Miroshnychenko, O. Novikov, M. Choshanov, and others studied the soft and hard skills issue at different times. Many researchers dealt with general issues of

soft skills formation, in particular A. Ivonina, O. Chulanova, A. Vetkin, E. Kulik. In our opinion, there are interesting publications that highlight the issue of soft skills formation and development in the pedagogical field (T. Yarkova, I. Cherkasova, E. Popova, etc.).

However, the issue of soft skills formation and development while teaching philological disciplines in higher educational institutions remains insufficiently studied.

Presenting the main findings. In the component formula of the new school, the leading role is given to teachers of the new formation, who are at the forefront of social and educational transformations, successful, motivated, competent, and who are agents of modern change. The teacher's new mission is considered in the context of European professionalism with the preservation of the best Ukrainian mental characteristics and the European dimension of pedagogical qualities. Rethinking the social and professional mission of the teacher of the New Ukrainian School highlights the need to train professionals adapted to modern socio-cultural conditions, able to work creatively and with developed soft skills.

Nowadays, more and more attention in higher school is paid to soft skills formation that will allow university graduates to be successful in their careers. There is no single classification of such skills. Thus, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education distinguishes the following soft skills: communication skills, leadership, the ability to take responsibility and work in critical conditions, the ability to resolve conflicts, work in a team, manage their time, understanding the importance of deadlines, the ability to think logically and systematically, creativity (Методичні рекомендації, 2019).

According to N. Dluhunovych, soft skills are universal skills that promote professional development and career-building in any field, but it is impossible to trace them (Длугунович, 2014, р. 239). A similar view is expressed by A. Stadnii and S. Holod (Стадній, Голод, 2020). Ukrainian researchers N. Makhnachova and A. Midliar claim that soft skills are 'socio-psychological skills that a person needs in most life situations (communication, leadership, team work, public presentation, public speaking and others). K. Koval understands this term more closely as a sociological term, 'which

refers to the emotional intelligence, a list of personal characteristics that are somehow related to effective interaction with other people. These are the skills which are difficult to detect, directly identify, test, and demonstrate. This group includes individual, communication, and management skills. The concept of soft skills is related to how people interact with each other, i.e. soft skills are equally necessary for everyday life and work. According to research, professional success is determined by soft skills. (Коваль, 2015, p. 163).

Possession of soft skills is the so-called functional literacy. UNESCO and the European Commission have even set the minimum level required for every European to be a full member of society (Europe Direct).

Soft skills are often seen as non-specific and closely related to personality traits and attitudes, social and managerial abilities. For example, M. Cinque and D. Haselberger argue that soft skills are a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, interpersonal, intellectual and practical, that help people adapt, behave positively and effectively cope with the challenges of their professional and daily lives (Cinque, 2016, p. 390)

In 2016, the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland) formulated the basic soft skills necessary for successful professional activity and everyday life in the XXI century. They are a set of skills or competencies that could be called meta-subjects or common to different activities and contain some characteristics of cognitive and intellectual activity, in general, emotional intelligence, self-management, and constructive interaction with other people (Петрова, Подліняєва, 2021).

The scholars from the Malaysian Institute of Higher Learning interpret soft skills as incorporating aspects of generic skills which include non-academic skills such as communicative, critical thinking and problem solving, team work, life-long learning and information, entrepreneurship, ethic and professional moral, and leadership. Researchers highlight that these seven soft skills should be embedded in the curriculum at higher educational institutions (Tang Keow Ngang, Hashimah Mohd Yunus, & Nor Hashimah Hashim, 2015).

Ukrainian scholars R. Kalytchak, G. Kharlamova, O. Klimenkova, O. Lutsenko, S. Paschenko, V. Pavlenko, O. Senyk have chosen the

following seven key universally important skills: self-management (which includes self-motivation, taking responsibility, task setting/prioritizing, time-management), critical thinking development, reflective thinking and writing, communication with audience, academic debate, group work and peer-to-peer interaction (Kalytchak et al., 2018).

Soft skills are especially essential for primary school teachers. Educational and professional programs in Ukrainian higher educational institutions created for the specialty 'Primary Education' take into account the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education, the Professional Standard of Primary School Teachers. They provide future primary school teachers with soft skills formation and development while studying the obligatory educational components.

The educational and professional program 'Primary Education' (the first level of higher education) implemented in Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University provides mastering soft skills. In particular, the obligatory components of the philological cycle, namely Foreign Language (for Professional Purposes), Ukrainian (for Professional Purposes), Modern Ukrainian Language with Practicum, Children's Literature, Practicum of Oral and Written Speech) together with other disciplines, form the following program competencies: the ability to communicate in the state language at the official business level, to have the skills of normative literary speech in various fields of communication; the ability to understand others and produce their programs of communicative behavior, adequate to the goals, areas, situations of communication, active interaction with other speech subjects; the ability to work in a team; the ability to cooperate, to act in a group; the ability to be critical and self-critical, persistent in the tasks and responsibilities, etc.

At the same time, in our opinion, optional educational components are a crucial resource for soft skills development, which can significantly improve future primary school teachers' learning outcomes.

An effective way to adjust the content and practical components of vocational education in order to develop future primary school teachers' soft skills can be the introduction of the following elective courses: 'English in Professional Activities,' 'English Vocabulary in Professional Activities,' 'Fundamentals of Language Communication,' 'Language and Intercultural communication,' 'Fundamentals of Public

Speaking,' 'Ukrainian Speech Etiquette,' 'Blogging Skills in Professional Activities.'

The overall goal of these courses is to form a successful, communicatively skilled teacher who is able to optimally address professional issues. The specificity of these courses is not only in mastering the theoretical material but also in ensuring the practical study of language as a system of worldview, a means of cultural coexistence in European society, and self-improvement of the individual. More broadly, this specificity is manifested in the study of the features of effective influence on the environment through both oral and written communication.

In particular, the study of the course 'Fundamentals of Language Communication' aims to form the specialist's communicative literacy. The teacher's main professional tool is language as a semiotic information system. It is a means of intracultural and intercultural communication and cognition.

The discipline 'Blogging skills in professional activities' involves the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills for creating and maintaining your blog related to future professional activities.

The purpose of the course 'Language and intercultural communication' is to form a system of students' knowledge about the structure, patterns, and most important aspects of linguistic intercultural communication. The course prepares for effective professional and everyday communication in a multicultural environment.

The purpose of the course 'Ukrainian speech etiquette' is to promote the formation of a national culture of speech behavior in specific communicative situations (greetings, addresses, farewells, wishes, thanks) based on the communicative-activity approach.

'Fundamentals of public speaking' is aimed at teachers' communicative skills formation. Future primary school teachers gain special knowledge, skills, and abilities for public speaking to different audiences.

The lecturer should use relevant information that would best meet the interests of student society. It contributes to worldview formation, develops professional communication skills based on professionalism, friendliness, and respect for another person, and focuses on spirituality, national awareness, and respect for other cultures. Soft skills development occurs during lectures and practical classes while teaching philological disciplines. To this end, not only lectures with the elements of conversation are practiced, but also lectures-discussions, and problem-based lectures. For the lecture-discussion, it is necessary to choose topics that provide ample opportunities to discuss different points of view. For example, within the discipline 'Blogging Skills in Professional Activities', there may be a topic 'Manipulation in blogging.' It involves consideration of the following issues: theory of lies; types of manipulation in the media; fake as one of the methods of manipulation; fake recognition. While taking the course 'Fundamentals of the theory of language communication', students study the following topics: 'Features of intercultural communication,' 'Communicative taboos,' 'Communicative deviations', etc.

Problem-based lectures will be beneficial in highlighting topics that are completely new to students. The theoretical material is presented as unknown, and the lecturer presents a problematic situation so that students are actively involved in the proposed contradiction analysis. For example, in highlighting the topic of the perfect speaker's image, the lecturer demonstrates an excerpt from the film called 'Another One' (Denmark, 2020) at the beginning of a lecture while teaching 'Fundamentals of Public Speaking.' The lecturer asks students to vote for one of the three politicians describing them and not representing their names. Similarly, students have the opportunity to choose someone during the lectures in public speaking. Both in the film and in real life, it turns out that the students voted unanimously for Hitler. Students are asked the following question: Is it possible without choosing an analysis of the inner essence, the content of speeches to choose the ideal speaker only on the basis of external parameters, namely the ability to speak beautifully and lead the crowd?

During the practical classes, lecturers often use modeling of pedagogical situations, analysis of fragments of lessons, interactive communication technologies. For example, while studying the topic 'Laws of Communication' within the course 'Fundamentals of the Theory of Language Communication' students discuss the problematic situations offered by the lecturer. The situations are common for

primary school teachers; knowledge of certain laws of communication is crucial to solve them. When studying various topics within the course 'Ukrainian Speech Etiquette,' students themselves model pedagogical situations and suggest ways to use etiquette formulas. Working on the first topic within the course 'Children's Literature' called 'Ukrainian Children's Folklore' students try to outline areas of work with primary school pupils and genres of children's folklore.

During classroom classes, students are offered various types of activities, namely individual or group projects. They embody the major program learning outcomes and their consolidation in practice. For example, the creation of group projects is provided for in the study of topics 'Modern Ukrainian children's literature,' 'Modern Foreign children's literature' (course 'Children's Literature'). Project management can be the basis for conducting both seminars and students' independent learning. In the process of teaching the task, methods are constantly complicated. One of the popular forms of work is the development and demonstration of a multimedia presentation. It can be used both during the individual task and during the work of the project team.

Approximate topics of presentations-reports can be the following: The concept of communicative anti-etiquette. Lexical and grammatical deviations. Communicative deviations in Ukrainian speech etiquette. Etiquette violations of a nonverbal nature. Typical lexical errors in the speech of modern teachers. The ideal speaker is (to represent a particular figure).

As well as a number of specific case studies and business games, which allow students to gain not only knowledge but also to develop an algorithm to achieve the goal, formulate, express, argue, and defend their position in public speaking, work in a team, set goals, distribute responsibilities and coordinated work for optimal results.

It will be appropriate to use such techniques and methods of work as self-presentation, writing creative essays (as part of the courses 'Language and Intercultural Communication,' 'The Ukrainian language (for Professional Purposes),' 'Foreign Language,' etc.), speeches.

Lecturers organize students' independent learning with information and educational resources, creating presentations. Future primary school teachers' skills are developed to manage their time, understand the importance of deadlines, and have the ability to think critically.

Conclusions. Indeed, soft skills are not the only vital for life; they are desirable to have, in addition to purely professional knowledge and skills. They form the very essence of the pedagogical profession and their purposeful formation should be at the center of the educational pedagogical curriculum. Soft skills formation is provided by all systems of pedagogical training, namely the specialized philological disciplines and practical pieces of training. The corresponding didactic and methodical components are organically included in the maintenance of each philological discipline.

Thus, a graduate of a pedagogical university always has an advantage because future primary school teacher has the necessary flexible skills for success in life. Future primary school teachers will always be able to realize themselves in other fields, in particular, due to the existing socio-psychological competencies that are universal.

Given the results of the study, it should be noted that the teachers' soft skills development is determined by modern requirements. In the process of teaching philological disciplines, it is necessary to organize the educational process as educational co-working and prepare teachers for active interaction, communication, self-development, and self-realization of the subjects of the educational process.

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## РОЗВИТОК М'ЯКИХ НАВИЧОК МАЙБУТНІХ УЧИТЕЛІВ ПОЧАТКОВИХ КЛАСІВ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ФІЛОЛОГІЧНИХ ДИСЦИПЛІН

Статтю присвячено актуальній проблемі підготовки педагогів у вищій школі. Мета розвідки— дослідити процес формування м'яких навичок учителів початкових класів у процесі вивчення філологічних дисциплін.

Здійснивши порівняльний аналіз дефініцій терміна «soft skills», запропонованих українськими та зарубіжними дослідниками, автори статті акцентували на тому, що особливої значущості м'які навички набувають у професіях типу «людина — людина», до яких належать і вчителі початкових класів.

У статті доведено, що soft skills становлять саму суть професійної діяльності вчителя початкової ланки освіти й цілеспрямоване їх формування має перебувати в центрі підготовки таких педагогів. На основі досвіду викладання філологічних дисциплін у рамках реалізації освітньої програми «Початкова освіта» (перший рівень вищої освіти) в Полтавському національному педагогічному університеті імені В. Г. Короленка автори розвідки простежили особливості розвитку м'яких навичок у студентів. Це відбувається з орієнтацією на сучасні нормативні документи (зокрема Закон України «Про вищу освіту», Професійний стандарт учителя початкових класів закладу загальної середньої освіти), системно, у процесі викладання як обов'язкових освітніх компонентів, так і вибіркових.

Дослідники зазначили, що для ефективного формування та вдосконалення soft skills на лекційних і практичних заняттях необхідно застосовувати різні способи взаємодії суб'єктів освітнього процесу— імітаційну гру, кейс-стаді, колоквіуми, індивідуальні та групові проєкти тощо.

Висновуючи, автори статті зауважують, що розвиток гнучких навичок у майбутніх учителів початкової школи великою мірою залежить від способів організації середовища як освітнього коворкінгу та готовності викладачів і студентів до продуктивної інтеракції, саморозвитку й самоорганізації.

**Ключові слова:** м'які навички, освітній процес, учитель початкових класів, заклад вищої освіти, дисиипліни філологічного циклу.

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104