



## IMPROVING THE "HARDSKILLS" AND "SOFTSKILLS" OF TEACHERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

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**Annotation.** *In article is given the concepts of "soft" and "hard" skills and their importance in the development of a professional in a professional field, and notes the general and specific features of the approaches to understanding "softskills" and "hardskills" competencies in research in this area.*

**Keywords:** *vocational education, education organization, teachers, qualifications, "hard skills", "soft skills", development, skills improvement.*

The globalization and digitalization of modern information processes require serious reforms of world education systems aimed at changing the entire pedagogical paradigm. The analysis of these systems has shown that improving curricula does not always lead to a practical increase in the quality and efficiency of the educational process, and a formal approach to the educational process, divorced from the requirements of real practical activity, does not contribute to the development of professional qualifications of teachers of vocational education organizations. Influential international experts in the field of education propose the harmonious introduction of two types of competencies into the educational process. These are:

“Hard skills” are professional competencies, and “Soft skills” are universal (general) competencies. “Hard skills” are a set of knowledge that can be determined and measured (typing skills, driving skills, English language skills, mathematical knowledge, computer software skills), while “soft skills” are flexible, malleable skills that do not have a clear and common unit of measurement (creativity, teamwork skills, emotional stability, responsibility, initiative, etc.).

“Hard skills” require specific knowledge of a specific profession to obtain, and the presence of these skills is determined by conducting an exam. Now, a teacher who is able to develop the ability to adapt to new living conditions in teaching technologies and learners, that is, who embodies the ability to critically assess problems and find ways to solve them, analyze the situation, adequately change their activities, master communication tools, obtain and use information, and make rational choices, in short, those with "soft skills" meet the requirements of a modern school [1].





“Soft skills” - “soft” competencies (creativity, communication skills, teamwork, determination, critical thinking, etc.) are often interpreted as personal qualities, traits, abilities, since they are directly related to a person’s character and life experience. In order to understand the meaning and essence of the concept of “soft skills”, we turned to the Wikipedia encyclopedia. According to it, “Soft skills”, also known as power skills, general skills, essential skills or basic skills, are psychosocial abilities that are usually applicable to all professions. These include: critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, professional writing, teamwork, digital literacy, leadership, professional attitude, work ethics, career management and intercultural fluency. This is different from hard skills that are specific to individual professions. The term "soft skills" was coined by the US Army in the late 1960s.

This refers to any skill that does not require the use of a machine, and although military activities include many important activities in this category, it has not yet been fully catalogued and studied for the military, what is needed to win wars, lead groups, motivate soldiers is understood as a set of social skills. According to research conducted by Harvard and Stanford Universities, which are among the leading educational institutions in the world, only 15% of career success is due to "hard skills" and 85% - "soft skills".

Based on this, it is shown that it is important for future teachers to acquire these "soft skills" in order to become mature specialists in their future professional activities. In the 21st century, soft skills are a key and priority in the international labor market, a prerequisite for employment and success in life. Nobel Prize-winning economist James Hackman argues that “soft skills predict success in life, they are not accidental successes, and programs that strengthen soft skills have an important place in the portfolio of effective public policies” [2].

The importance given to the subject by employers of the world's largest companies is evidenced by the fact that soft skills are now as important as GPA (once considered the most important factor in making a decision). Therefore, the need to teach soft skills has become a major concern for educators and employers around the world.

“Developing soft skills is much more difficult than developing hard skills, because it requires constant active interaction with others and a willingness to receive behavioral feedback.” While hard skills can be learned from a book or through individual training, soft skills require the participation of the environment and other people in order to be mastered. Therefore, learning soft skills does not depend on a





single individual, as it is influenced by various unpredictable factors, obstacles and challenges.

According to research, the key professional development skills of a 21st century teacher include:

**1. Critical Thinking.** Critical thinking skills are the ability to think logically, analyze data, and make evidence-based decisions. This ability allows a teacher to make informed decisions and prioritize the interests of students and align with educational goals and standards, helping to explore personal perspectives and work on strengths and weaknesses to increase student engagement.

**2. Communication.** Communication skills include the ability to clearly express personal thoughts and actively listen. It includes verbal and nonverbal communication: speech, writing, and body language (gestures, facial expressions, eye and body movements).

**3. Leadership.** The Department of Education states that teachers who demonstrate leadership skills are more likely to remain in their profession and have a greater impact on their students, especially when it comes to actively organizing and managing the learning process.

**4. Creative thinking.** Creative thinking means developing new ideas and using innovative teaching methods to make learning more interesting and effective.

**5. Conflict resolution skills.** Managing disagreements and conflicts in the classroom is essential to maintaining a positive learning environment. It is essential for teachers to have these skills to maintain this positive learning environment.

**6. Responsibility and dedication.** Responsibility and dedication are traditional and modern teaching skills. Being committed to your profession as a teacher means going beyond the call of duty and fully engaging in your profession. At the same time, it means taking advantage of ongoing professional development opportunities, attending seminars and conferences, and constantly looking for ways to improve your teaching skills and for the success and well-being of your students.

**7. Digital literacy.** Modern education requires the use of digital technologies in the learning process, so it is becoming a key professional development competency for teachers. It is necessary to develop knowledge and skills to use technical equipment and understand how to apply technology in education and school management [3].

**In conclusion,** it is worth noting that improving the "hardskills" and "softskills" of teachers in vocational education organizations, developing critical and creative thinking, communication and leadership skills, professional responsibility and





dedication, problem and conflict resolution, as well as forming primary "soft and hard skills" such as digital literacy, and developing this "set of skills" in practice and during the educational process play a major role in training highly qualified middle-level specialists in modern vocational education organizations.

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