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DEVELOPING THE 21 CENTURY LITERACY SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AS A PRECONDITION FOR THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

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The higher education system in Ukraine experiences several challenges at present: Covid-2019 lockdowns force universities to switch to distance learning; when choosing their future profession, young people have considerable doubts about advisability of taking a bachelor's degree; due to economic problems and industrial stagnation a chance for a graduate to be employed and to build up a successful career in Ukraine converges to zero. For those ambitious undergraduates who are determined to gain a degree, universities in Ukraine should provide forming and developing all the necessary skills to ensure graduates' competitive ability in labour markets both in Ukraine and abroad.

The objectives of this study are to present the necessity of teaching the 21 Century skills at universities, give the examples of everyday literacy skills implementation and to enlist digital resources, environments and applications crucial for professional or academic career of today's undergraduates.

The analysis of recent scientific and publicist sources indicates that the term 'the 21st century skills' is rather blurred as according to different sources it includes a different number of personal, professional and soft skills and abilities (there are lists with 6, 12, 13, 18, 21, 55 skills) associated with 21st century trends and professional demands. The overlap of different classifications from educational establishments and stakeholders is the necessity of educating an undergraduate able to responsibly use all the variety

of IT means and tools, to be versatile and flexible under rapid changes in the information technology and global society.

The concept of the 21 Century skills reflects all the inevitable abilities for postgraduates in their prospective careers. Nevertheless, among the mentioned above skills a group of three skills forming the literacy skill list are those which ensure a person's background for lifelong learning and therefore the ability to keep pace with the technology advancement and every decade knowledge renewal. Literacy skills focus on discerning facts, publishing outlets, and the technology behind them [1]. The literacy 21 Century skills are information literacy, media literacy and technology literacy. With time, the so-called IMT skills are going to be more and more significant for every professional that is why it is so important to inculcate them into undergraduates when they study for their degrees. In order to give examples of literacy skills application the definitions of each kind of literacy should be provided.

Information literacy is the ability to effectively 'find information, critically evaluate it, and ethically apply that information to solve a problem' [2]. First of all, an information literate person is able to find a credible or authoritative digital source and verify the information provided. For example, when possibilities for a foreign or external full-time internship are limited because of lockdowns, numerous online training sessions, workshops and webinars are available on the web. In order not to commit a gaffe, a potential applicant should check the offering through the homepages of the internship course advertisement and double-check the course mentors' or instructors' credentials for educational activities and certification. Positive reviews and praising feedback texts from grateful course graduates could only be trusted when the reviewer's webpage is available on some professional network on the internet (like LinkedIn or Viadeo).

Secondly, an information literate person also can distinguish between a fake webpage and a real one owing to careful web link examination and thanks to their knowledge of the web domain registration principle within the Domain Name System maintained by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) at the Root Zone Database.

Thirdly, an author who submits their research results should be able to remove from their consideration list predatory journals and publishers and specify established journals in their sphere of expertise in order to be acknowledged as a mature scientist.

Finally, one of the crucial skills for a prospective researcher is knowledge of Academic integrity values of which citing, quoting and paraphrasing principles are a benchmark for a responsible academic.

Media literacy helps undergraduates and prospective professionals ‘analyze media and understand potential issues that can arise when using digital tools’ [3]. It forms a person’s ability to participate in the media world – to perceive it and to contribute to media messaging with diverse forms of texts, visuals and video. Most young people are quite advanced in media resources observation. On a large scale, media literacy matters for any professional as a set of skills helping find a target audience and present themselves and their employers on the internet through creating and sharing the appropriate and adequate content.

Technology literacy provides undergraduates with ‘understanding different applications and the best ways to use them’ [3]. Technology literacy also gives people ‘the basic information they need to understand what gadgets perform what tasks and why’ [1]. Nowadays, an employee should demonstrate:

1) skillful usage of simple online document editors (Acrobat PDF tools, PDF2Go) and multimedia editors (Audacity, Adobe Spark Video, Clideo)

2) mastery of suites of intelligent apps functioning (like Google Workspace, Adobe Creative Cloud, iWork for iCloud)

3) ability to use online presentation software (Prezi, Keynote, Canva, Beautiful.ai, Haiku Deck)

4) some familiarity with innovative virtual reality applications (in language learning Mondly, Jigspace VR, Samsung VR are the leaders)

5) proficiency in the collaboration platforms usage (like Confluence, Podio, Common Data Environment, Unified Communications, GoSoapBox, Ryver) and customer relationship management services (like Bitrix24, Planfix and Worksection CRM).

Introduction into work of all the mentioned above tools, environments and applications is significant for an innovative enterprise advance and prosperity, which are attained due to proficiency of its employees and managing staff.

The most effective strategy to motivate undergraduates to acquire and develop skills is to show their utility. Nowadays, every teacher in Ukraine uses video conference applications to give classes as well as a learning environment to provide instructing and to control students’ self-study. Nevertheless, when a teacher introduces to students new cutting-edge applications and resources, has the ability to create, edit and share decent educational material quickly, knows how to design and give captivating presentations, makes efforts to immerse learners into augmented or virtual reality, uses a CRM service to plan and manage extracurricular activities students learn the literacy skills through collaboration with their teacher simultaneously with acquiring the knowledge on the discipline that teacher instructs them in.

Foreign language is a discipline allowing rewarding collaboration between students and teachers engaging their students into learning activities with English interface applications and resources. Teaching students searching for authentic valid pieces of information in English sources, processing them, coming up with their own idea or product and presenting their work results in the foreign language is the goal worth a deliberate and collaborative effort. Not only improving the command of the English level matters but also the literacy skills being mastered as the language acquisition progresses. The results of the mentioned above collaboration of lecturers and undergraduates are presented in several studies [4, 5] and on the website of the department of foreign languages of Tavria University [6].

In conclusion, it should be stated that literacy skills are to be developed and mastered both by teachers and undergraduates persistently and in accordance with the IT advance since information, media and technology literacy skills will become fundamental for all the spheres of economy and education. In particular, the technology skills are going to be inevitable for lifelong learning, self-improvement and knowledge renewal which in turn will ensure one's competitiveness in their profession.

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