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EDUCATION AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AS A CATALYST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN DIGITAL COMPETENCIES OF STUDENTS

The rapid digitalization of society and the transformation of economic processes determine the need for specialists who are able to work in a high-tech environment. Traditional educational models offered by higher education institutions are no longer keeping up with the pace of development of the IT industry and changes in the labor market. At the same time, business needs graduates who possess not only the basics of knowledge according to their specialty, but also are able to work in a high-tech environment. That is why the partnership of higher education institutions with business is becoming a key prerequisite for the formation of modern digital competencies in students that meet the real needs of the economy.

Digital competence is a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, attitudes, and other personal qualities in the field of information and communication and digital technologies, which determines a person's ability to successfully socialize, conduct professional and/or further educational activities using such technologies [2].

According to a study conducted in 2019 in Ukraine, 53% of citizens had digital literacy below the basic level. Only 28% of citizens had software skills above the basic level. This includes working with texts in Word, working with data in Excel, editing photos and videos, creating presentations, etc. 55% of citizens had problem-solving skills above the basic level. These include paying for utilities, recharging a mobile phone, transferring money from card to card online, watching videos, listening to music, buying goods online, and taking online courses. In addition, 34% of Ukrainians became victims of fraudulent actions via the Internet per year and only 11% of Ukrainians can recognize false information on the Internet [3].

To increase the level of digital competence in 2021, the Digital Competence Framework for Entrepreneurs of Ukraine was developed under the auspices of the Ministry of Digital Transformation [1]. The Framework identifies

five main areas of digital competence in the process of entrepreneurial activity, namely:

Area 1. Working with information and data in the digital environment in the process of entrepreneurial activity. Area 2. Using professional digital applications and resources in operational processes of entrepreneurial activity. Area 3. Business communication and interaction in the digital environment in the process of entrepreneurial activity. Area 4. Security in the digital environment in the process of entrepreneurial activity. Area 5. Digital transformation of business and professional development [1].

The necessary levels of digital competence are also defined: A - basic; B - medium; C - high [1].

In March 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, by order No. 167-r, adopted the Concept for the Development of Digital Competencies and approved an action plan for its implementation [2].

The formation of a student's digital competencies begins in higher education institutions, which provide theoretical knowledge, fundamental training and the development of critical thinking, while business provides practice, experience with current technologies and the opportunity to integrate innovations into the educational process. Such synergy makes it possible to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real professional skills, which is especially important for workers in the fields of IT, digital marketing, automation, big data management and others. Effective cooperation involves the creation of various forms of interaction, namely: joint educational programs, dual education, internships, mentoring programs, business incubators, hackathons, corporate trainings and certified courses. An important role is played by updating the curricula of higher education institutions with the participation of leading companies, which allows ensuring that the content of education complies with the latest digital trends. It is also important to involve business representatives in teaching activities and conducting master classes.

Cooperation with business provides students with access to real cases, modern digital tools and professional software. Students learn to work with cloud services, data analytics systems, cyber security tools, and acquire teamwork skills in a digital environment. This not only forms digital literacy, but also flexible skills such as communication, project management, and adaptability, which increases the competitiveness of graduates in the labor

market. Many companies invest in the creation of modern laboratories on the basis of HEIs, digital classrooms, and virtual learning environments. This allows not only to modernize the educational infrastructure of HEIs, but also to provide students with the opportunity to study on real equipment and with up-to-date technological solutions, which is especially important for institutions that do not have sufficient funding.

Despite the obvious advantages of partnership, there are also certain difficulties, which consist in the difference in the goals and pace of work of HEIs and corporate structures, insufficient flexibility of curricula, limited HEI resources and bureaucratic procedures. Also negatively affected are weak communication between participants, lack of long-term cooperation strategies and low motivation of students to participate in practice-oriented projects.

Further development of the student's digital competencies should occur simultaneously with the development of artificial intelligence, big data, robotics and other digital technologies. In these conditions, business can act not only as a partner, but also as a driver of educational changes. Joint educational and innovative ecosystems, centers of competence, network models of interaction between higher education institutions and companies create conditions for the effective formation of digital competencies of future specialists. This contributes to the modernization of the educational process, provides relevant practical training of the student, stimulates innovation and forms a competitive specialist capable of successfully implementing himself in the digital economy. The activation of such cooperation is strategically important for the sustainable development of Ukraine and its integration into the global high-tech space.

Literature

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