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DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract. *This article is focused on studying the importance of developing life skills in pre-service teacher training and identifying strategies for their implementing. The notion of 'life skills' has been defined. The importance of life skills development has been proved. The four major skills for life identified by Partnership for 21st Century Skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and collaboration) have been focused on in the article. Pre-service teachers' readiness to develop these skills in their perspective students has been highlighted. The strategies and examples of possible activities for implementing life skills in educational process have been provided. The PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology (2020) was thoroughly analysed in order to see how well pre-service teachers of English are trained for developing life skills in their perspective students. The Curriculum has been concluded to be effective in training pre-service teachers of English to life skills development.*

Key words: *collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, life skills, pre-service teacher training.*

Introduction. The world we are living is marked by rapid changes, to which education systems need to adapt. Therefore, the New Ukrainian School reform puts forward new requirements for educational system. A key change concerns approaches to learning and educational content. According to the reform a 21st century education is to be focused on developing skills, students need to succeed in this new world. Teachers should create conditions in their lessons to enable school children to collaborate and communicate in the classroom, use their creativity, think critically and be responsible for their own learning results [9]. Thus, the development of core skills has become of utmost importance in modern education. The development of these skills is crucial, not only for entering the job market and contributing to regional development but also for enhancing individuals' well-being and mental health. Therefore, developing life skills has become one of the major aspects in Pre-Service Teacher Training.

Main text. This article is focused on studying the importance of developing life skills in pre-service teacher training and identifying strategies for their implementing. The study used a descriptive research design to obtain information concerning the ways of implementing life skills in PRESETT Curriculum.

Literature review on the research problem has brought us to better understanding of life skills. World Health Organization (WHO) defined life skills as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life [7]. Danish, S.et al. (2004) consider life skills as the skills allowing individuals to succeed in different environments where they live, such as school, home, and their environment [4]. Meanwhile, Cronin, L. D. & Allen, J. (2017) define life skills as skills needed to deal with the demands and demands of everyday life [3].

There is a large volume of published studies describing the importance and effectiveness of life skills education. According to the New Ukrainian School (2017) "it is not enough to only feed a child with knowledge. It is also necessary to teach how to use that knowledge. Knowledge and skills, linked to the pupil's value system, form their life competencies that are essential for successful self-fulfillment in life, education and work" [9]. Prajapati, R. et al. (2016) mention that life skills education bridges the gap between basic functioning and capabilities and strengthens the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society [8]. Gupta, P. (2015) emphasizes that life skill education can play a vital role in helping students to lead a healthy and productive life and to contribute positively to the society [5]. In the introduction to the article on the development of life skills through school sport activities Agustin, N. M. & Oktriani, S. (2021) point out that life skills are one of the formulas that can be applied to facilitate and develop all forms of potential of the younger generation during the learning process in formal and informal classes [1].

There is no definite list of life skills. Certain skills may be more or less relevant depending on the individual's life circumstances, culture, age, geographical location, etc. However, in 1999, the World Health Organisation identified six key areas of life skills:

- *Communication and interpersonal skills*. This broadly describes the skills needed to get on and work with other people, and particularly to transfer and receive messages either in writing or verbally.
- *Decision-making and problem-solving*. This describes the skills required to understand problems, find solutions to them, alone or with others, and then take action to address them.
- *Creative thinking and critical thinking*. This describes the ability to think in different and unusual ways about problems, and find new solutions, or generate new ideas, coupled with the ability to assess information carefully and understand its relevance.
- *Self-awareness and empathy*, which are two key parts of emotional intelligence. They describe understanding yourself and being able to feel for other people as if their experiences were happening to you.
- *Assertiveness and equanimity, or self-control.* These describe the skills needed to stand up for yourself and other people, and remain calm even in the face of considerable provocation.
- *Resilience and ability to cope with problems*, which describes the ability to recover from setbacks, and treat them as opportunities to learn, or simply experiences [6].

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has played a key role in promoting the development of life skills. The organization has identified four major skills for life which include: creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and collaboration [7]. They are often called as Four Cs of 21st century. We consider these skills to be a part of every lesson in the same way as literacy and numeracy, so pre-service teachers must be ready to develop these skills in their perspective students. In order to do it perfectly they need to be knowledgeable about the strategies for implementing life skills in educational process. Having done

literature review on the research problem [10], we managed to design a table providing both strategies and examples of their implementing in the classroom (Table 1).

Table 1 – Strategies for implementing life skills in educational process

Life Skills	Strategies	Activity Examples
Critical thinking	▪ Evaluating	▪ Rank the following companies by evaluating the performances
	▪ Recommending	▪ Write your recommendations about new nuclear plant
	▪ Decision making	▪ Choose the correct insurance policy for your company
	▪ Interpreting	▪ Interpret the symbolic equation to the word equation
Creativity	▪ Reworking	▪ Redefine the scientific term
	▪ Writing	▪ Write a story about stubborn thief
	▪ Sketching	▪ Sketch a future school in 2050
	▪ Designing	▪ Design a logo for a company
	▪ Altering	▪ Improve the scenario to make it better
	▪ Developing	▪ Develop an android app for classroom
	▪ Improvising	▪ Improve the scenario to make it better
	▪ Theorizing	▪ Write your own theory about your findings
	▪ Inventing	▪ Invent a device
Communication	▪ Think Pair Share	▪ Discuss your ideas with your partner
	▪ Interviewing	▪ Take an online interview of astronaut
	▪ Emailing	▪ Write an email
	▪ Group discussions	▪ Discuss something in groups
	▪ Online chat	▪ Share your ideas in the group chat
	▪ Expert opinion	▪ Discuss the project with the expert
	▪ Presentation	▪ Individual and pair presentation
	▪ Peer feedback	▪ Provide your partner with a feedback
	▪ Debates	▪ Debates on the topic
Collaboration	▪ Group projects	▪ Project to a team
	▪ Collaborative documentation	▪ Research document using google doc
	▪ Team assignments	▪ Quiz competition between teams
	▪ Problem based learning	▪ A real-life problem to be solved
	▪ Case study	▪ A case study assigned to a group of students
	▪ Core-curricular activities	▪ Seminars, webinars, conferences
	▪ Student`s clubs	▪ Creation of study clubs
	▪ Group investigation	▪ Creation of investigation team
	▪ Break out groups	▪ Break out rooms on zoom or split into small groups

Table 1 provides strategies for implementing life skills both in class and out-of-class. The given examples suggest better understanding of the possible activities a teacher can use. Thus, giving teachers a way to creativity in designing activities relevant to the subject they teach.

In order to see how well pre-service teachers of English are trained for developing life skills in their perspective students the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology was thoroughly analysed [2]. As a result, we can state that being based on the constructivist approach or 'to theory through practice approach', the Curriculum enhances the development of life skills in future teachers of English. It means that Methodology classes do not rely on traditional lectures. On the contrary, the theory is taught through practice. According to this approach students are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. This active involvement is facilitated by working in small groups and pairs, brainstorming, solving problems, using case studies, simulations, group projects, etc. All of the methods suggested by the Curriculum are intended to promote high level of interaction and students' involvement in their own learning processes, thus it develops life skills.

Summary and conclusions. Summing up, we may state that this research confirmed the importance of developing life skills in pre-service teachers. The life skills has been proved to help students build confidence in both communication and collaboration, provide them with tools important for development, find new ways of thinking and problem-solving, thus equipping them with the tools they need to live a more creative life, to find ways to cope with the challenges of modern society. In this article we emphasized the necessity for pre-service teachers' readiness to develop life skills in their perspective students. Four Cs of 21st century (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) were considered in the article. The strategies for implementing these life skills in educational process were developed. In order to see how well pre-service teachers of English are trained for developing life skills in their perspective students the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology was analyzed. It was concluded that the Curriculum is based on the constructivist approach or 'to theory through practice approach' and provides life skills oriented activities regularly practiced in the Methodology classes. So, we can state that pre-service teachers are well-trained to life skills development.

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Аннотація. *Ця стаття присвячена вивченню важливості розвитку життєвих навичок у додипломній підготовці вчителів та розробці стратегій їх реалізації. Визначено поняття «життєві навички» та доведено важливість їх розвитку. Чотири основні життєві навички, запропоновані Партнерством для навичок 21-го століття (креативність та інновації, критичне мислення та вирішення проблем, спілкування та співпраця), були у фокусі уваги дослідника. Акцентовано увагу на готовності майбутніх учителів до розвитку цих навичок в учнів. Визначено стратегії та наведено приклади можливих завдань для впровадження життєвих навичок в освітній процес. З метою визначення рівня готовності майбутніх учителів англійської мови до розвитку життєвих навичок в учнів було ретельно проаналізовано Типову навчальну програму «Методика навчання англійської мови» рівень бакалавра (2020 р.) та засвідчено її ефективність.*

Ключові слова: *співробітництво, комунікація, креативність, критичне мислення, життєві навички, додипломна підготовка вчителів.*

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