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KEY COMPETENCIES AS A BASIS OF A SPECIALIST'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

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Professional competency is the most important characteristics of a specialist, who shall be ready for professional activity in order to fulfill personal professional functions in an independent, responsible and responsible manner. Ukrainian scientists interpret this notion as a feature of specialist's personality that reveals itself in ability to act professionally, in readiness to fulfill professional functions and in capability to effectively solve standard and problematic issues arising in a professional activity on the basis of existing knowledge, skills and minimal experience.

Approaches to interpretation of this definition by Ukrainian and Russian scientists coincide with the views of modern American scientists (Donald M. Medli, Mac Neil, D. Moberli, D.R. Cruksenk, M. Randsell, J. H. Stronge etc.), who consider the notion «professional competency» as an ability to solve tasks and readiness to one's own professional role in one or another area of activity. In this regard, competency is represented by, first of all, employers and society in the form of some specific expectations related to professional activity of graduates of educational institutions. Thus, professional competency is regarded in two aspects: firstly, as **ability** to solve tasks and **readiness** to one's own professional role; secondly, as **resultative characteristics**, which are diagnosed by expertise of products of professional activity in order to define to what extend individual characteristics of employees meet expectations of employers and society.

Modern European society is known to be in need of professionals with wide possibilities of not only technical nature, but with clear understanding of working methods, with positive attitude to work and to cooperation with colleagues, of those who are characterized by the personal capacities, which define flexibility, ability to adopt fast in an unknown situation and to quickly make necessary decisions. That is why the modern education system shall prepare a specialist capable to meet these new requirements.

Interpretation of specialist's professional competency combining views of American and European scientists has been offered by Australian scientist T. Hoffmann. The author offers three ways of understanding this notion:

1. As obvious and registered activity results.
2. As certain standards of completed activity.
3. As personal qualities defining effectiveness and innovation of a particular activity.

Thus, we can see that American, Australian, European, Russian and Ukrainian scientists are consolidated in interpreting this notion and stress that professional competency is an ability and readiness to fulfill professional functions, and resultative characteristics of scientist's qualification.

Speaking about the structure of a specialist's professional competency scholars single out *key competencies* that are necessary for any professional activity; *basic competencies* that reflect the specifics of a particular profession and simultaneously implement the key competences; and *special competencies* that reflect the specifics of a particular professional activity.

That is why we would like to turn to the problem of key competencies that is fully discussed by European scholars. Having analyzed the list of key competencies in two sectors – education and economics, given by the DeSeCo experts, we have singled out those of them that are presented in the reports of all countries-participants [2]:

1. **Social competencies / Cooperation:** this domain comprises all 'interpersonal skills' such as cooperating with others, advocating and influencing, resolving conflict and negotiating. In a narrower sense, it addresses: working together, guiding and supporting others, and seeking guidance and support from others.

2. **Literacy / Intelligent and applicable knowledge:** this domain is multilevel. It comprises the classical notion of 'literacy' linked to language processing and the basic skills: the ability to read, write, speak, listen and understand (including numeracy). On a 'deeper' level it is linked to the use of mathematics, highly complex information processing, problem solving, critical thinking, meta-cognition and reflexivity. It may include also IT information processing competencies.

3. **Learning competency / Life-long learning:** this competency area implies technical/methodological, strategic and motivational dimensions Curiosity as a driving motor is frequently mentioned. Some countries value resilience and perseverance more than others.

4. **Communicative competency:** As reported above, some countries subsume this competency area under social competence. But beyond this classification dilemma, all countries address it in one way or another. One obvious element in this competence is the command of languages. While mastering the native language is obviously seen as a basic competence by all countries, often categorized as literacy, there are substantial differences in how far foreign languages are seen as being an essential ingredient of

communicative competencies. And an additional controversial issue is which languages should be taught, how much of them, and at which age and level.

The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills project was created by Cisco, Intel and Microsoft and launched at the Learning and Technology World Forum 2009 in London. During 2009, the project operated with five Working Groups, each of which produced a White Paper. The model for assessments of 21st century skills, based on an analysis of curriculum and assessment frameworks for 21st century skills developed around the world, identifies ten important skills (that are close to competencies) in four broad categories [1].

I. **Ways of Thinking:** creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, learning to learn, metacognition.

II. **Ways of working:** communication, collaboration (teamwork).

III. **Tools for working:** information literacy, ICT literacy.

IV. **Living in the world:** citizenship – local and global, life and career, personal and social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence.

Thus, after all we can say that a professional competency is a complex of key, basic and special competencies. Moreover, the key competencies are necessary for a specialist of any profession, and is the basis for the acquisition of basic and special competencies.

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