

The Importance and Opportunities of Soft Skill Development in Higher Education, the Possibilities of Coaching and Career Planning Support in Higher Education Practice

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Abstract

The topic is particularly relevant given that the rapidly changing expectations of the labor market are increasingly emphasizing non-professional competencies such as cooperation, communication, self-awareness, adaptability, and problem solving. At the same time, there is a growing expectation for higher education institutions to successfully prepare students for the labor market, and finding and applying effective tools and methods to support this can be a significant competitive advantage for an educational institution.

As part of our primary research, we conducted a pre-tested, standardized questionnaire survey among students in Hungarian higher education. We used a snowball sampling method to collect data, which resulted in 598 evaluable questionnaires being processed. The empirical results show which soft skills students—as future employees—consider to be crucial for their future careers and which competencies they expect higher education institutions to develop in a targeted manner.

Based on the research results, we present solutions that can be implemented within the institutional framework, through which personalized coaching and conscious career planning can effectively support the development of students' key competencies. We believe that our findings contribute to the renewal of higher education practices and provide guidance for the development of student-centered, competency-based development programs.

The results of the research can provide a basis for competence-based curriculum development and the conscious integration of soft skills elements into both curricular and extracurricular activities. They can support the development of career offices, mentoring and alumni programs, and contribute to the personalization of student services and the strengthening of cooperation with labor market actors.

Keywords

Education, soft skills, carrier opportunities.