

**How to Cite:**

Mozgalova, N. G., Baranovska, I. G., Hlazunova, I. K., Mikhalishen, A. V., & Kazmirchuk, N. S. (2021). Methodological foundations of soft skills of musical art teachers in pedagogical institutions of higher education. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S2), 317-327. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS2.1355>

## **Methodological Foundations of Soft Skills of Musical Art Teachers in Pedagogical Institutions of Higher Education**

**Nataliia G. Mozgalova**

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine

**Iryna G. Baranovska**

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine

**Iryna K. Hlazunova**

National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Kyiv, Ukraine

**Aleksandr V. Mikhalishen**

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine

**Natalia S. Kazmirchuk**

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine

**Abstract**--Discussions about the exact sciences dominate education these days, with a lot of emphasis on teaching STEM disciplines. Because of this, teachers of other subjects, such as art or history, felt a little left out when talking about how to properly prepare students for future careers. However, there is even less attention is paid to the soft skills that students need to succeed after they graduate and work. The classes designed specifically for soft skills are the rare occurrence, but that does not mean these skills are not important. This determines the relevance of this paper. The purpose of the paper was to highlight the necessary soft skills for future specialists in musical or artistic disciplines, as well as to trace their differences with hard skills. The key research method was the analysis of theoretical materials and the development of general soft skills, which are necessary for the training of teachers of musical art, and the development of which is important for teachers to pay attention to. Teachers will not always have time to plan classes that perfectly

combine hard and interpersonal skills. However, once a few key actions have been identified, it is possible to adapt the new lessons to integrate those same actions into future lessons. This will help reduce preparation time while creating complex activities that will help students not only improve their knowledge of content but also their ability to apply that knowledge in the future workplace.

**Keywords**---art professions, higher education, interpersonal skills, training of future specialists, training of musicians.

## Introduction

When asking employers what skills they want to see in their employees, they usually answer – communication, reasoning, decision making, and problem solving – such requirements can be found among humanities graduates. While there are critics who question the value of an education in the humanities, a 2019 study by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation found that today's job market rewards people with the interpersonal skills that university for the humanities claim to instil. Employees with soft skills may know how to interact, collaborate, communicate, and otherwise practice behaviours that go beyond just getting the job done. They can better navigate the workplace, achieve harmony in work with others, and, when combined with hard skills, achieve their professional goals. However, finding people who fit the bill is not easy (Alcivar et al., 2020; Takano et al., 2011).

What are the soft skills? Generally speaking, interpersonal skills are the skills a person needs to communicate with and work with others. On the other hand, hard skills are simply technical skills and ability to complete a task. With the new age of technology and the instant gratification of the information or response obtained with a click or a text message, the soft skills necessary for human interaction, communication, problem solving and teamwork are being lost, and more specifically, “for Gen Z social interactions have moved from parks and streets to mobile devices” (Smith, 2016). Millennials (born between the 1980s and early 1990s) who are transitioning to leadership positions and young people in the generation Z (born between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s) who enter the workforce do not have sufficient soft skills Smith (2016), and judging from the author’s observations working with students from kindergarten to high school, this trend continues. “Soft skills have featured prominently in the national debate about workforce readiness in recent years, and many employers consider these skills more important than skills that can be taught in the workplace”. (Smith, 2016). Soft skills are more important skills than technical skills taught on the job because they apply to all areas of work and life. Soft skills are valuable for everyone, regardless of position or employment. The human personality with its individuality and uniqueness becomes the highest value, this is what employers pay attention to. It is believed that people are able to create new worlds and inspire reality (Mozgalova & Liva, 2018). A characteristic feature of the movement is the principle of universalism, which unites art, philosophy, and science (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

Higher education has an ethical imperative to ensure that graduates are prepared, resourceful, and familiar with their industry. Consequently, music teachers today are faced with the challenge of how best to ensure that graduates continue to be relevant and benefit the labour market – this is the subject of many studies ([Andrushchenko et al., 2010](#); [Regush, 2013](#)). Universities are required to provide graduates with the appropriate skills for employment. Therefore, the development of interpersonal skills should be included in the training programme. In addition, universities must combine hard and soft skills in the curriculum if confident students with a sense of balance acquire these skills. However, some studies ([Bartleet et al. \(2012\)](#)), among others, highlight concerns regarding the ability of music teachers to negotiate a career change. Given the shift in the definition of employment opportunities from traditional employment to personal development, the study identified effective development of employment opportunities as “strengthening the professional identity of students in accordance with cognitive aspects, taking into account their predispositions and abilities for professional activity” ([Bennett, 2016](#); [Bennett et al., 2016](#)).

### **Materials and Method**

The theoretical phase of this study included assessment of the Ukrainian context and aligning this study with a scientific understanding of employability based on existing skills ([Arevalo et al., 2017](#); [Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016](#)). To understand how these two aspects have been combined, the general definitions of employability should be noted. These include “the ability to move independently within the labour market for the personal fulfilment through sustainable employment”; “A set of achievements – skills, understanding, and personal qualities that increase the chances of graduates to get a job and succeed in their chosen profession” and “skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal qualities that make a person more inclined to choose and secure the professions in which he can be satisfied and successful”.

The study also used analysis and synthesis. Analysis involves the separation of an integral subject into its constituent parts (sides, signs, properties or relationships) for the purpose of their comprehensive study. The authors sought to distribute the existing soft skills classifications. The reference was the classification by the researcher Bruce Tulgan, who divided soft skills into three categories: the first includes qualities associated with professionalism and responsibility, the second includes critical thinking and the ability to quickly solve problems, and the third includes consistency, proactivity, and others. Then the synthesis was applied. Synthesis is a method of thinking, which involves combining the previously identified parts (sides, features, properties or relationships) of an object into a single whole. With the use of this method, the skills necessary to train future musicians were determined ([Ulbosyn et al., 2015](#); [Garrison & Kanuka, 2004](#)).

There are many ways to define and teach soft skills, which means that there are many interpretations of what they are and how they can be taught. Soft skills are simply personal and interpersonal skills. But can there be more than soft skills and is it possible to better understand them with a better definition? Clearer definition of interpersonal skills – employment skills that speak of an employee's

interpersonal skills and personality, such as “teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, efficient use of resources and effective communication” and “a natural aspect of a person's social skills and characteristics”. Soft skills are partly a natural part of personality, which means there are seeds for soft skills, but they need to be nurtured and nurtured (Altyney et al., 2015; Chartrand & Belin, 2006).

## Results

First, it is necessary to figure out what skills are. They can be divided into three main types: transferable / functional, personality / relationships, and knowledge-based. The table below provides a description and examples of each skill type (Table 1).

Table 1  
Common skill types

Skill type	Description
Transferable / Functional	Actions taken to complete a task, carried over to different job functions and industries Based on the abilities Expressed in verbs Examples: Organise Promote Analyse Write
Personality / Relationships	Traits or personal attributes that assist in performance of work Developed in childhood and life experience Expressed in adjectives Examples: Patient or diplomatic Results oriented Independent
Knowledge-based	Knowledge of specific items, procedures and information required to complete specific tasks Acquired as a result of education, training and work experience Expressed in nouns Examples: Personnel Management Contract management Accountancy

In “Bridging the Soft Skills Gap” Tulgan (2015), researcher Bruce Tulgan highlights soft skills and categorically breaks them down into three categories. Tulgan writes that soft skills are less tangible and in fact much more difficult to define than hard skills, but they are critical to success in the workplace. The authors created a simplified table of soft skills that Tulgan identifies in three categories (Table 2).

Table 2  
General categories of soft skills according to B. Tulgan

Soft skills		
Professionalism	Critical thinking	Self-consistency
Auto-evaluation	Proactive learning	Respect for context
Personal responsibility	Problem solving	Civic stance
Positive attitude	Decision making	Service
Good work habits		Teamwork
People skills		

Each skill in this chart is a valuable soft skill to be possessed, and can be taught by modelling and deliberately incorporating them into the classroom content. According to surveys, most music teachers stated that communication is the most important soft skill required in their work tasks. However, they complained about the lack of opportunities for practical and effective learning of this skill during their teacher training. These young teachers have shown that they have acquired communication skills during a micro-learning course. This is further exacerbated when excellent teachers were brought in for assessment and guidance. Furthermore, music teachers had positive feedback on their communication skills, which were significantly improved through activities such as instructional presentations, 12 weeks of teacher training, extracurricular activities, and attendance at courses such as philosophy of education, sociology of education, and learning management (Lebedev et al., 2015; Penhune, 2011; Pakhomova et al., 2021; Bocheliuk et al., 2021).

Many of the music teachers noted that the creative and critical thinking course helped them develop both critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, most music teachers noted that critical thinking and problem-solving skills are important and challenging in performing their work tasks in schools. In addition, they emphasised that critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential when they have to solve problems in various scenarios. In addition, aspiring music teachers explicitly pointed out that critical thinking and problem-solving skills were least needed when the school environment was stable with sufficient conditions and limited disciplinary problems. Therefore, aspiring teachers rarely have to look for different methods of problem solving. Some aspiring teachers emphasised that they rarely have the opportunity to solve problems because these tasks are usually taken on by experienced teachers. However, this skill can be developed in the workplace as well. The teaching load in schools is very different from what they have acquired as a result of teacher training. Most of the time, novice teachers had to go to experienced teachers and administrators to solve problems.

All aspiring music teachers agreed that they learned and developed teamwork skills during their professional training. The novice teachers said they acquired skills of teamwork through activities such as human capital development, fieldwork, and group assignments that required them to work with other team members. Lifelong learning skills needed to be maintained after the graduation. They should use this skill to develop students' interest, spirit and independence. Novice teachers indicated that they themselves would like to continue learning to

maintain these skills because they realise the lack of knowledge, need new ideas for teaching lessons, and are looking for additional information to share with their peers. In addition, information management skills have helped aspiring teachers to systematically disseminate relevant information, study accumulated information, and organise information from various sources in such a way that readers can easily understand it. Some universities provide courses in multimedia technology or educational technology to help aspiring teachers create a detailed lesson plan and present their lesson using multimedia devices. In addition, the aspiring teachers noted that these courses were very helpful for them to learn how to create websites, take photos and more. However, some aspiring teachers have argued that they did not receive this knowledge in the process of training teachers to develop the abilities of their students using information management skills, for example, student databases.

Soft skills training is also possible through art. Through art, it is possible to teach a wide variety of subjects, materials, theories, ideas and skills. A large part of art studies is about teaching students to creatively solve problems by creating works of art. Ultimately, this process teaches three subcategories of critical thinking; proactive learning, problem solving and decision making (Tulgan, 2015). For example, within any drawing, painting, or sculpture, the student must be proactive in finding and using materials (proactive learning), figuring out how he will creatively design and create the artwork, considering the criteria required by the teacher (problem solving), and choose a sequence of steps to start and finish an artwork (making a decision). Critical thinking is not as easy as vocabulary or factual answers. Critical thinking is defined as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully reflecting, applying, analysing, synthesising and/or evaluating information collected or generated from observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to faith and action (Croes & Visser, 2015). In particular, research links art experience with higher levels of thinking and problem-solving skills. By teaching problem solving and a wider range of critical thinking, one can learn organically through creativity and art criticism. In the paper “Critical Thinking and Art Teaching”, criticism of art in the classroom is an important way of verbally expressing opinions, emotions, responses, and is “a tactic that exploits and develops critical thinking in the study of past art forms”. One of the important components for training any future artists is the availability of soft skills. So, for example, they can be different for each profession. The table below describes the soft skills necessary for musicians (Table 3).

Table 3  
Soft skills necessary for musicians

Skills	Description
Ability to be creative and think outside the box	improvisation; composing innovative music; solving countless problems that arise before or during the performance
Ability to plan ahead	studying music before performing; juggling schedule; knowing what it takes to look better at concerts
Ability to take responsibility	scheduling and routing before lessons

---

Ability to collaborate and work effectively with others to achieve goals	and rehearsals; practicing your part for a group performance; leading part of an orchestra or group
Ability to think and understand patterns	ability to take part in an ensemble, orchestra, or choir
Ability to manage time and deal with several projects at once	teaching and performing music
	combining school with performing, practice, and the rest of life to succeed in music

---

One of the most overlooked skills is creativity. People get used to working according to certain rules and regulations. While this is sufficient for the day-to-day resolution of most business issues, it is necessary to be able to develop innovative solutions when new problems arise. Creative people can work within their organisation in such a way that they come up with new approaches helping to improve how their organisation responds to emerging problems.

### **Discussion**

Previous studies have shown a mismatch between actual and expected soft skills in the workplace. Although the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education of Malaysia has already developed and launched a Soft Skills module for Malaysian public universities, which contains general skills that cover all areas of study. However, the findings of this study showed that this is not enough to meet the needs of music teachers in the application of soft skills required at their workplace. Teachers have a special responsibility to develop interpersonal skills among students. In addition, educators have a great influence on the development of interpersonal skills in future art teachers. Unfortunately, the period of four years of study at the university was not optimally used to develop interpersonal skills among trainee teachers. This is supported by this conclusion. Educators should actively practice soft skills with their trainee teachers in order to raise awareness of the importance of soft skills and thus encourage future teachers to improve their soft skills. In developing the soft skills of trainee teachers, public university teachers face a variety of challenges, namely large class sizes, limited time to learn the curriculum, and negative classroom attitudes among trainee teachers (Valieva, 2020). Educators are encouraged to rely on their creativity and teaching skills to improve the interpersonal skills of trainee teachers. A very powerful and efficient way to teach soft skills is to integrate soft skills training with hard skills training. Thus, the positive impact of teaching and learning processes in universities will be implemented. Teaching and learning processes become more engaging, which in turn increases the success of future teacher and gives them sufficient soft skills in the workplace.

Having experience and abilities in the field of soft skills increases a specialist's chances of getting a job or moving up the career ladder in a company, as well as becoming a better equipped and fully functioning member of society. For the purpose of career and employment skills assessment, in a poll by the Seattle Jobs Initiative, more than 75 percent of employers surveyed said interpersonal skills are as important as or more important than technical skills for entry-level

employment (2017). [Naufalin et al. \(2016\)](#), ran three rounds of tests, starting with an initial test, to establish a baseline that measures the soft skills of university students. The baseline test was followed by interpersonal skills training, which continued in the second and third tests. The six dimensions of soft skills were measured on a scale of “Very good”, “Good”, and “Poor”. As expected, the baseline test showed that the majority of surveyed students performed poorly on each dimension. The worst performance was the leadership and the courage to take risks, and the most promising, but still insufficient, was confidence. The second test showed progress in different percentages for each dimension, but overall, it showed a deviation from the percentages in the “Poor” column, meaning that the students' ability to develop interpersonal skills improved slightly over their pre-existing ability. The third and final test showed even more progress and further retreat in the “Poor” column. All parameters were now heavily weighted, except for confidence, which had the most weight in a very good column. This study shows that by deliberately focusing on learning soft skills and teaching them from their own experience, researchers have proven that constant and measurable growth can occur. It is impractical to ignore training these skills, knowing that they are absent and that they can be learned and developed.

It takes many years of training and many hours of practice to become a musician. This hard work and effort is an investment in the future success in music. However, a music career is challenging and highly competitive in nature, and the only experience is not enough to improve employment opportunities. Scholars agree that both hard and soft skills are required to create and sustain careers [Pool & Sewell \(2007\)](#), but are skills alone enough to meet the needs of new graduates? The Malaysian music skills that contributed to this study, specific guidelines for interpersonal skills to be directed towards a music college degree. Overall, the transition to work was relatively easy for these participants and they were able to earn their living. For Joe, D.M., Musa and Zach, whose higher education and work experience took place outside Malaysia, the track record and study abroad status (reputation capital) have facilitated the transition into the Malaysian music industry. Participants emphasised that interpersonal skills need to be used in industry as they used to be during university studies. They all noted the benefits of regular opportunities to apply their university education to service activities outside the university. According to them, they have played a critical role in enhancing their employability. They emphasise that soft and hard skills, not applied or critically analysed, are just skills. After [Kolb \(1984\)](#), skills were transformed into knowledge “through the transformation of experience”. Participants describe such transformations as a progression of inspired reflective transitions from theory of practice and back to theory as they learn from experience to make sense of their experiences, identify skills that require further development, and explore new aspects of the industry. The importance of applied or experimental learning is not new; however, the common work during study is now beginning to manifest itself. For example, a 2016 study by Bennett, Richardson, and McKinnon on the employment of Australian graduates found that the biggest indicator of employment success was the work done in the last year of university, even if that work was not related to the student's discipline. Researchers attribute this to increased self-efficacy, determine the ability to perform a function. Self-efficacy is the result of skill and indirect experience, social belief, and psychological well-being. Six of the eight participants raised the



issue of self-efficacy, explaining that the skills and knowledge in their practical experience as professional musicians gave them more confidence in finding a job during their school-to-work transition, in applying their skills in new environments, and in being entrepreneurial in creating new opportunities. Working in a pedagogical environment prior to graduation has helped secure graduate employment as thought-based practice, professional networks and professional self-efficacy have already been established. This paper shows that interpersonal skills for musicians and representatives of other creative occupations are required during their training.

## Conclusion

Soft skills are more important than ever to succeed in the workplace, given that teamwork and communication is such a high priority in today's teaching environment. However, the modern school curriculum relies heavily on teaching hard skills. Thus, teachers must find ways to integrate soft skills into their current teaching. With the help of a clear definition of the necessary interpersonal skills for representatives of creative occupations, it is possible to more effectively solve the problems arising in the teaching process, prepare more qualified and stress-resistant specialists.

Music teachers can gain insights on how to integrate soft skills into their instruction from several resources. However, there are always general guidelines to be followed. Teachers in creative disciplines, especially those related to music, should design or adapt existing exercises to emphasise group work, independent research, peer-to-peer communication, time management, and presentations. With a strong emphasis on group dynamics, teachers can simulate the work environment that many students will find themselves in.

## References

- Alcivar, C. M. M., Santos, R. O. Z., & Gamez, M. R. (2020). The musical intelligence as a basic competition in parvular teacher. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(4).
- Altynay, B., Dana, B., Erkin, A., Shagirova, K., & Krykbaeva, S. (2015). Formation of the professional competence of the future specialists. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 185, 141-145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.466>
- Andrushchenko, T. I., Bekh, V. P., & Bekh, Y. V. (2010). Samorehuliatsiia sotsialnoho orhanizmu krainy [Self-regulation of the social organism of country]. *NPU imeni MP Drahomanova Publ., Kyiv, Ukraine*.
- Arevalo, O. E. C., de Cardenas, B. Z., Suarez, J. M. L., & Gamez, M. R. (2017). Environmental training of students of the civil engineering career the Universidad Tecnica de Manabi. *International Research Journal of Engineering, IT and Scientific Research*, 3(5), 1-11.
- Bartleet, B. L., Bennett, D., Bridgstock, R., Draper, P., Harrison, S., & Schippers, H. (2012). Preparing for portfolio careers in Australian music: Setting a research agenda. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, (1), 32-41.
- Bennett, D. (2016). Developing employability in higher education music. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(3-4), 386-395.

- Bennett, D., Richardson, S., & MacKinnon, P. (2016). Enacting strategies for graduate employability: How universities can best support students to develop generic skills. *Sydney: Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching*.
- Bocheliuk, V. Y., Nechyporenko, V. V., Pozdniakova-Kyrbiatieva, E. H., Pozdniakova, O. L., & Siliavina, Y. S. (2021). Psychological and pedagogical aspects of consolidation of social capital of higher education institutions. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S2). <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS2.1357>
- Chartrand, J. P., & Belin, P. (2006). Superior voice timbre processing in musicians. *Neuroscience letters*, 405(3), 164-167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neulet.2006.06.053>
- Croes, J. A. V., & Visser, M. M. (2015). From tech skills to life skills: Google online marketing challenge and experiential learning. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 26(4), 305.
- Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *The internet and higher education*, 7(2), 95-105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experience as the source of learning and development. *Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall*.
- Lebedev, Y., Anufriev, V., Lebedeva, T., Kaminov, A., & Yachmenyova, A. (2015). Professional training of future green economy specialists and strategic priorities for sustainable subsurface management. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 214, 657-666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.664>
- Moskvichova, Y., Mozgalova, N., Shcholakova, O., & Baranovska, I. (2019). Historical Prerequisites for the Formation, Worldview, and Aesthetics of Romanticism: Specificity of the Ukrainian Model. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 8(4), 300-312.
- Mozgalova, N. G., & Liva, N. V. (2018). The European archetype of the sacred in the context of the historical conflict of faith and knowledge. *Scientific Notes: History*, 25, 240-246.
- Naufalin, L. R., Dinanti, A., & Krisnaresanti, A. (2016). Experiential learning model on entrepreneurship subject to improve students' soft skills. *Dinamika Pendidikan*, 11(1), 65-73.
- Pakhomova, T. O., Komova, O. S., Belia, V. V., Yivzhenko, Y. V., & Demidko, E. V. (2021). Transformation of the pedagogical process in higher education during the quarantine. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S2), 215-230. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS2.1341>
- Penhune, V. B. (2011). Sensitive periods in human development: evidence from musical training. *cortex*, 47(9), 1126-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2011.05.010>
- Pool, L. D., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education+ Training*.
- Pucciarelli, F., & Kaplan, A. (2016). Competition and strategy in higher education: Managing complexity and uncertainty. *Business Horizons*, 59(3), 311-320. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.01.003>
- Regush, Yu. (2013). Romantic tendencies in Yakov Shchogolev's poetry. Berdyansk: Berdyansk State Pedagogical University.

- Smith, B. A. (2016). Teaching soft skills to Generation Z. *Idaho Business Review*. [online], <https://idahobusinessreview.com/2016/12/20/teaching-soft-skills-to-generation-z>.
- Takano, K., Sakamoto, S., & Tanno, Y. (2011). Ruminative and reflective forms of self-focus: Their relationships with interpersonal skills and emotional reactivity under interpersonal stress. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51(4), 515-520. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.05.010>
- Tulgan, B. (2015). *Bridging the soft skills gap: How to teach the missing basics to today's young talent*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Ulbosyn, M., Batima, T., Yessen, O., Bulatbayeva, A., & Ergalieva, A. (2015). Psychological aspects of formation the professional competence of the future specialists. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 185, 276-280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.365>
- Valieva, F. (2020, March). Soft skills vs professional burnout: the case of technical universities. In *Proceedings of the Conference "Integrating Engineering Education and Humanities for Global Intercultural Perspectives"* (pp. 719-726). Springer, Cham.