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**THE ROLE OF DESIGN THINKING IN THE FORMATION OF
MODERN COMPETENCIES OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

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Annotation. The article substantiates the expediency of using “design thinking” as a new educational methodology. Using design thinking allows students not only to go beyond the standard vision of the problem, but also find new approaches to solving problems. It is proved that using of “design thinking” methodology in the educational process contributes to a deeper understanding of the material, increases the motivation of students, creates a positive emotional background, and allows students to consolidate theoretical knowledge in practice in a number of economic and management disciplines.

Keywords: Design thinking, management, motivation, education

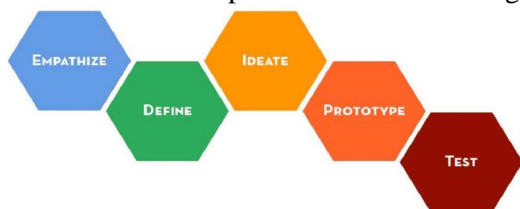
In the past few years, there has been an increasing trend when a company needs from an employee not only their technical skills, but also their ability to think creatively, collaborate effectively, and adapt quickly. LinkedIn company surveyed over 5,000 talent professionals in 35 countries and found that 92 % of respondents equated soft skills with hard skills [1]. The report says that «Soft skills can make or break a hire, and they can also make or break a company: 92 % of talent professionals say they matter as

much or more than hard skills when they hire, and 80 % say they're increasingly important to company success» [1].

The methodology for creating innovations, called design thinking [2, 3], is built on radical collaboration, active group discussions and communications, a culture of rapid experimentation and empathy, which contributes to the acquisition of knowledge, development of soft skills and abilities that can be used in further educational and professional activities.

The Institute of Economics and Management of Tomsk State University, understanding the demand of the modern labor market, as well as the importance of group projects in the studying of a modern specialist in the field of economics and management, teaches students the "design thinking" methodology as part of the training practice for undergraduate and graduate students field of study "Management", starting from 2017.

The specified methodology includes a number of stages: empathy, analysis and synthesis, idea generation, prototyping, testing (Figure). At each stage, students interact with real economic agents (employees of the company; customers organizations; potential consumers, etc.). This allows them to make sure in practice that there are "gaps" between user experience of interaction with a product or service and expectations manufacturing company.



Stages of design thinking process [4]

During the implementation of the training practice, students applied this methodology in a number of companies of Tomsk: LAMA, KDV, Eskimos, SIBAGRO, SAVA, etc. Thus, at the first stage, the company puts up a real business problem to students on one of its products. Students, sequentially going through all the stages of the design thinking process, must solve the task assigned to them, and then present it to the company's employees.

Working in groups, a deep understanding of the real problems of clients, radical cooperation not only with representatives of their group, but also with company employees, real clients, potential users, allows, based on the

results of practice, to solve the problem posed to them, to develop soft skills, as well as to understand what problems real business is currently solving

According to the results of surveys conducted annually, 98 % of students responded positively to the changes that have taken place after the introduction of this educational technology into the educational process. When the students were asked whether the program helped them to develop skills and abilities that he/she can apply in future projects, out of 173 people, 61 people agreed, 107 people completely agreed, and 5 people found it difficult to answer.

Thus, one of the students in the feedback questionnaire indicated: “During the “design thinking” course, various teaching methods were used, so the work was not a burden, but a joy. Theoretical information was presented in a practical format and remembered well. I was pleased to realize that we did something worthwhile. I felt like a real manager in a big company.” The use of the “design thinking” methodology not only in the process of educational practice, but also within the framework of other economic and management disciplines, in our opinion, will make a significant contribution to achieving the goal of teaching, which was formulated by the Nobel Prize winner Richard Feynman as follows: “The goal of teaching should not be to help the students learn how to memorize and spit out information under academic pressure. The purpose of teaching is to inspire the desire for learning in them and make them able to think, understand, and question.”

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