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«ТРАНСВЕРСАЛДЫ ДАҒДЫЛАР: ТӘЖІРИБЕ, МӘСЕЛЕЛЕР, БОЛАШАҒЫ»

ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ҒЫЛЫМИ-ПРАКТИКАЛЫҚ

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**«ТРАНСВЕРСАЛДЫ ДАҒДЫЛАР: ТӘЖІРИБЕ, МӘСЕЛЕЛЕР,
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МАЗМҰНЫ

№	Автор(лар), мақала тақырыбы	Беттер
Пленарлық мәжіліс		
1	Асылбекова М.П., Отарова Т.Н. Болашақ мұғалімдердің трансверсалды дағдыларын дамыту тәжірибесі	3
2	Mourat Tchoshanov Designing and studying stem learning in digital age via blended approach of engineering, learning sciences, and didactics	9
3	Ширбачеева Г.Ш. Педагогические вызовы современности: поиск новых подходов к образованию в социокультурной ситуации	12
4	Вахидова Л. В. Теория и технология профессионального развития педагога в контексте трансверсальности	15
5	Кожамкулова Г.Е. Интеграция трансверсальных навыков в содержание куррикулума» (на примере куррикулума Назарбаев Интеллектуальных школ)	20
6	Садикова Ш.А. Теоретико-методологические представления об образовательной среде и основаниях ее проектирования	25
7	Ахмедьянова А.Х. Демонстрация как инструмент оценки профессиональных и трансверсальных компетенций будущих педагогов	30
8	Санатбай П.А. Кәсіби даярлау үдерісінде Soft skills дағдыларын дамыту: шетел тәжірибесі	33
9	Шабаева Г. Ф., Яшина В. И., Чинаева З. М. Инновационная подготовка студентов в полилингвальной и цифровой профессиональной среде по дошкольному профилю в рамках речевого развития детей.	39
10	Baimuldinova G. Thriving in transition: how transversal skills support students in university socium	43
1 СЕКЦИЯ: ПЕДАГОГТЕРДІ ДАЙЫНДАУДАҒЫ ТРАНСВЕРСАЛДЫ ДАҒДЫЛАР: ШЕТЕЛДІК ЖӘНЕ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ТӘЖІРИБЕ		
11	Сейітказы П.Б., Махмут Читиль, Ырымбаева Н.А. Медиабілім үдерісінде трансверсалды дағдыларды дамыту	51
12	Абильдина С.Қ., Мукушева А.Н., Дағарова Ж.У. Шағын жинақты бастауыш сынып оқушыларының трансверсалды дағдыларын дамытудың теориялық негіздері	55
13	Абдуллаева Н. М. Тенденции развития образования на современном этапе образовательного процесса	58
14	Абдуллаева Н. М., Шербачеева Л.С. Использование технологий 4К для стимулирования ученической мотивации	62
15	Сламбекова Т.С., Шакаримова К. К. Болашақ педагог-психологтардың кәсіби имиджін қалыптастырудағы трансверсальды дағдылардың мүмкіндіктері	66
16	Есекешова М.Д., Тастанбекова Н.Д., Аубакиров А.К. Техникалық және кәсіптік білім беру жүйесінде білім алушылардың көшбасшылық қасиеттерін қалыптастыру - басты міндет	72
17	Ботабаева А.Е., Ажибаева Р. Е. Болашақ педагогтердің трансверсалды дағдыларын қалыптастыруда онлайн оқыту платформаларын пайдаланудың маңыздылығы	77
18	Сейітказы П.Б., Кошанова М. Т. Медиа құзыреттілікті қалыптастырудың педагогикалық функциялары	81
19	Шаханова Э.А. Педагогикалық білімнің қолданылу ерекшеліктері	86

20	Otarova T. N., Zhanabaeva A.K. The importance of internet resources in learning	90
47	Молдабай А.М., Саурыкова Ж.М. Issues of terminology systematization»	190
48	Салкынбаева А.М. Тиімді оқыту және тәлімгерлік құпиялары	192
49	Тнимова Ю.М., Нурманалиева У.Т. Compound complex sentences in the english language	196
50	Seisebayeva B.T.,Tolkumbekova A. K. «E-learning as one of the forms of implementation of the learning process»	198
51	Seisebayeva B.T. Peculiarities of development of modern methods in foreign language teaching	202
52	Seitova Z.A. The study relevanceof future teachers’ social intelligence	207
53	Toregeldieva A. N., Tulebayeva S.K. Using a foreign language in information technology in modern conditions	212
54	Хасенқызы Т., Акрамова Ә.С. Білім беруді цифрландырудағы тәуекелдер	215
55	Аканова А. А., Искакова М. О. Оқытудың белсенді әдістері – сапалы білім беру негізі	221
56	Гайбуллаева С. С., Уалиева Н. Жастармен әлеуметтік педагогикалық жұмыстың ерекшеліктері	224
57	Калматаева А. М., Калымбетова Д. Ж. Церебральды сал ауруына шалдыққан балаларға арналған логопедиялық түзету жұмыстарының әдістемесі	229
58	Кошимбетова З. Д., Наурызбай Д. Б., Абдигаппарова А.Е. Вербализм вербальды балаларды диагностикалауға арналған тапсырмалар	233
59	Санбаева Б., Есенова К. Сравнительный анализ процессов социально-педагогической адаптации иностранных студентов в образовательных учреждениях Казахстана и Турции: вызовы, стратегии и перспективы»	235
60	Рсалы Г. М.Даярлық тобы балаларын мектепке дайындау мәселелері	243
61	Кәдірбай Ә. Б., Шамбулкерева Б.Н., Нұрхан Д. Е. Есту қабілеті бұзылған балалардың сөйлеу тілін дамыту жолдары мен әдіс-тәсілдері	247
62	Дарменова А.Е Цифрлану жағдайында білім алушылардың трансверсалды дағдыларын дамытудың маңыздылығы	252
63	Аликулова С. А., Болатқызы А. Аутизм – психикалық дамудың бұзылуы	257
64	Гайбуллаева С. С., Алыбай Ж. Жасөспірімдік агрессия – әлеуметтік-педагогикалық мәселе	261
65	Байқоңырова Ж. Балалардағы дизартрия бұзылысына жалпылама сипаттама	265
66	Ахметова Т.Ш. Интертеймент технологиясының заманауи білім берудегі маңызы	268
3 СЕКЦИЯ. ОҚУШЫЛАРДЫҢ ТРАНСВЕРСАЛДЫ ДАҒДЫЛАРЫН ДАМУ БҮЙІНШІ МЕКТЕП МҰҒАЛІМДЕРІНІҢ ТӘЖІРИБЕЛЕРІ		
67	Сламбекова С.Т. Дарынды балалардың әлеуметтік - эмоционалды әл-ауқатын психологиялық қолдаудың ерекшеліктері	273
68	Ныгманбеков К. М. Педагогтердің кәсіби даму мониторингін зерделеу арқылы даму жоспарын әзірлеу	276
69	Мамыракина Ф. С. Тіл сабақтарында бастауыш сынып оқушыларының креативті жазылым дағдыларын дамыту»	280
70	Шаханова Э.А., Сманова Л.У. Влияние стиля воспитания на специфику семейных конфликтов в подростковом возрасте	290
71	Ыбырайқызы А., Нұғыманова Н. Ә. Ертегі - халық педагогикасының көне жауһары	297
72	Тусипжанов Б.А. Кемпіркосақ» бейнелеу өнері үйірмесі	301
73	Аханова А. К. Мағжанның маржан мұрасы	304

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THRIVING IN TRANSITION: HOW TRANSVERSAL SKILLS SUPPORT STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY SOCIUM

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Abstract. In modern education, teachers serve as guides, nurturing students not only in subject matter but also in transversal competencies essential for success. This article explores the significance of transversal skills in higher education, analyzing student perceptions through surveys. Results reveal varied opinions on the correlation between these skills and academic performance, highlighting the importance of fostering them for navigating the complexities of university life. Drawing from research and educational frameworks, the article underscores the multifaceted nature of transversal competencies, including interpersonal skills, communication, and problem-solving. It advocates for prioritizing these skills to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. By fostering transversal competencies, educators and policymakers can equip students with the tools needed to thrive in an ever-changing educational landscape.

Keywords: education, transversal competencies, higher education, student perceptions

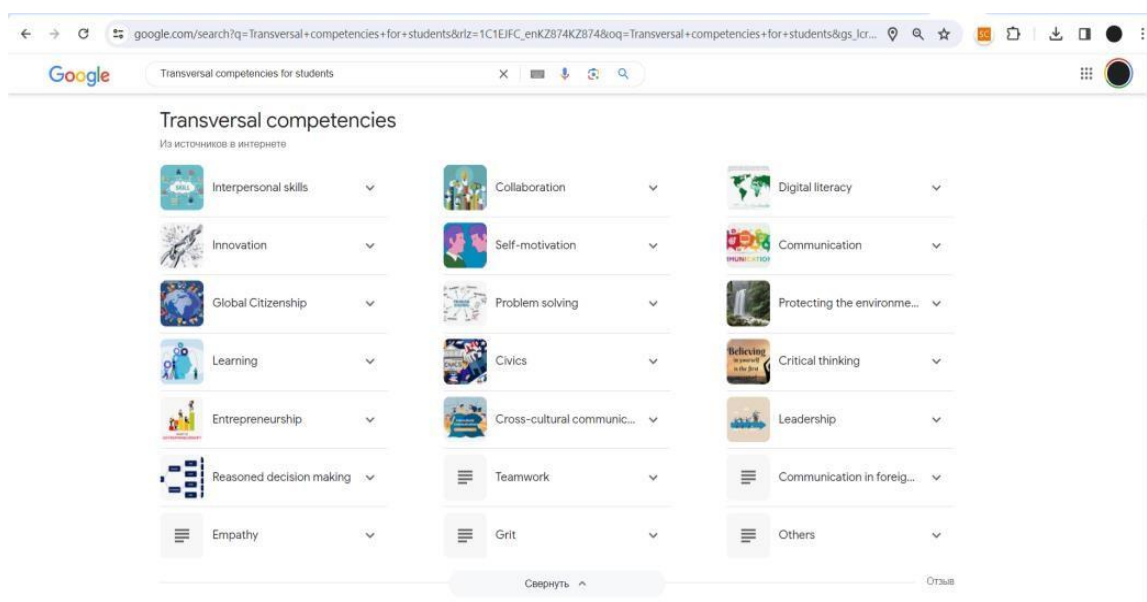
What is the purpose of any teacher entering the classroom full of students and facing all the prying glances and endless questions heating as an avalanche? When a teacher patiently gives the answers to each student, including all the experience and knowledge, trying to let the students get a new thing into their knowledge system – this is where magic of pedagogy realized. We, as

pedagogical staff, are not just to give and explain Math formulas or Grammar construction of a language lesson or correcting Physics problems – we are the path leaders! We lead the students to the world of knowledge and success; we teach and learn together as dissociating from the learners is failure in the developing process. Teachers always had and nowadays it is critical to have it too - *transversal competences* to correspond to the demands of the time and society to contribute to the development of a well-rounded personality to meet the modern world's calls.

Working with students demands constant research as every situation and every student is the reason to find the ways to overcome some obstacles or difficulties in the way of getting the aim or doing the assignments or tasks. Hence, we shouldn't just take the role of their parents, replace parenting; instead, we should foster students' self-development and thus adjustment to the new environment of education. Many factors can serve as the indicators of students' successful remodeling into the university socium and one of the main, as we consider, is their academic achievements success. University involves students into different activities along with studies such as sports clubs and competitions; linguistic clubs or on other different subjects and participation in different Olympiads; membership in different committees to help to students; various communities or clubs on interests where students can realize their talents and find friends or at last, overcome insecurity. There are students who try to attend several unities still having good academic results. This is how students try to realize their *transversal competences* in getting the stand within the university environment.

In this article we want to consider the *transversal competences* and the so-called 'cause-and-effect relationship' with the overall educational success of the students while studies in the higher educational institution.

When you look up for the information on "transversal competences" or "transversal competences for students", here what can one come up to if you use Google search engine (see Picture 1)



Picture 1. Transversal competences for students

So, what are the key competences to be considered transversal? Among others they are Interpersonal skills, Communication, Self-motivation, Problem solving, Teamwork, Learning, Communication in foreign languages, Digital literacy and etc.

It would not be correct to point some of the competences in Picture 1 as main or secondary. Alas, we would state they are all meaningful for everyone and to this or that extent they would differ in the degree of importance depending on a certain case, certain personality and individual peculiarities. So let us browse the researchers' works where the discussed topic was considered.

But firstly, we will look up the definitions of the matter.

There is a clear and quite lucid definition of this term is given by UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre at unevoc.unesco.org starting first with the skills, which goes like “*Transversal skills: Skills that are typically considered as not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge and that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings (for example, organizational skills)*”. [1] The site also underlines that such skills are really important for the students to be adjusted to the learning environment to be successful in the studies and other different life situations. Among the examples mentioned here one that is interesting is “Global citizenship” [2] that focuses on ‘tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding’ which is quite urgent for teachers to explain to the students so as to avoid interpersonal conflicts based on diversity, multiculturalism, difference of religions and religious views, general beliefs and traditions. The reason we pointed it out is the general situation in the world where the youth is subjected to the trending movements not realizing the harm to their dignity and their well-being.

Another inspiring definition is given by Chris Heron: “*Transversal Competences are competences that are transferable between jobs. They are what used to be described as “experience”. Some people have labelled them ‘soft skills’ or ‘emotional intelligence’. They are not job or sector-specific skills.*” [3]. The researchers would also consider this one as basic and explanatory but it really is simple. We chose it as it underlines, that transversal competences are not bound to one specific item, these competences go as mathematical lines crossing other lines and creating sections or sectors for associated interaction to get the result. The only feature is that with the students these competences cannot be described as experience they came with; it rather is accumulated during their university time and, if successful, generating mature attitude in problem solving or other situations demanding personal problem-solving skills.

Focusing on students and their competences M.S. Moldabekova and her co-researchers [4] concluded that transversal competences, which are critical for professional success, include not only the application of information and skills, but also more general characteristics of personality such as self-awareness, value orientation, and social interactions. These skills are necessary for navigating quickly changing conditions in future professional activities, requiring individuals to be adaptable, independent, and accountable for their actions.

In another research the development of the term is explored [5].

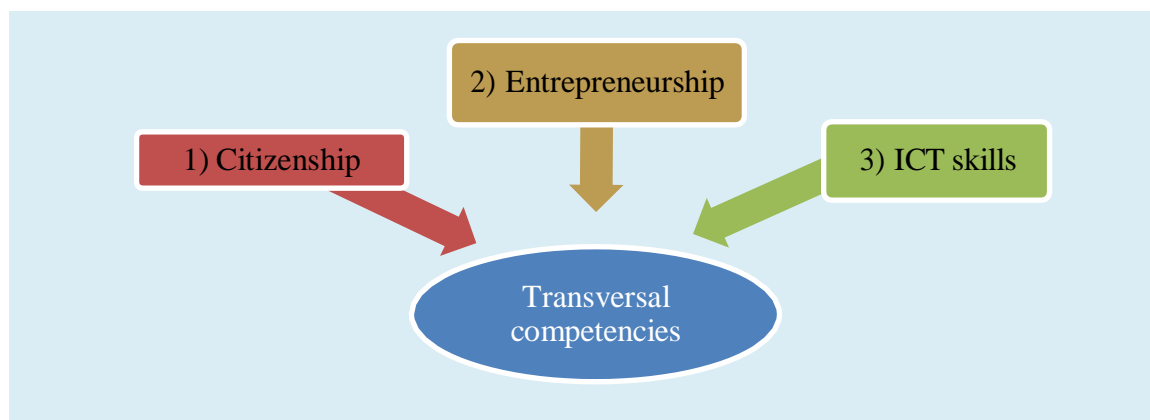


Diagram 1. Main components of TC

According to Diagram 1 and European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2012 [5] there are three main components of transversal competences (TC) but they are unattached to the material of traditional school disciplines. The acquisition of these abilities is viewed as equally crucial in the context of a fast-evolving knowledge-based society. Most EU countries incorporate citizenship, entrepreneurship, and ICT education in their elementary and secondary education curricula. The researcher attempted to give glimpse on the term “transversality,” and underlined its early more specific use in exact sciences and explained knowledge in education as a new field for the existing term. [5]

Some competences ‘*such as creativity and digital skills and the ability to cope with complexity seem to be critical*’. However, the concept of transversal competences is not obvious, and some perspectives are not really aligned, being, at times, ambiguous and/or varying due to the areas of activity or training in issue [6]. Also, it is stated that transversal competences appear to be ‘*generic and relevant skills*’ due to the reason that the learners should generate them through the period of their training” [6].

One more research by foreign colleagues focuses on “Key Competencies in Higher Education for Sustainability” [7] where they refer to the catalogue of transversal competencies used by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) and specify the following: (Diagram 2)

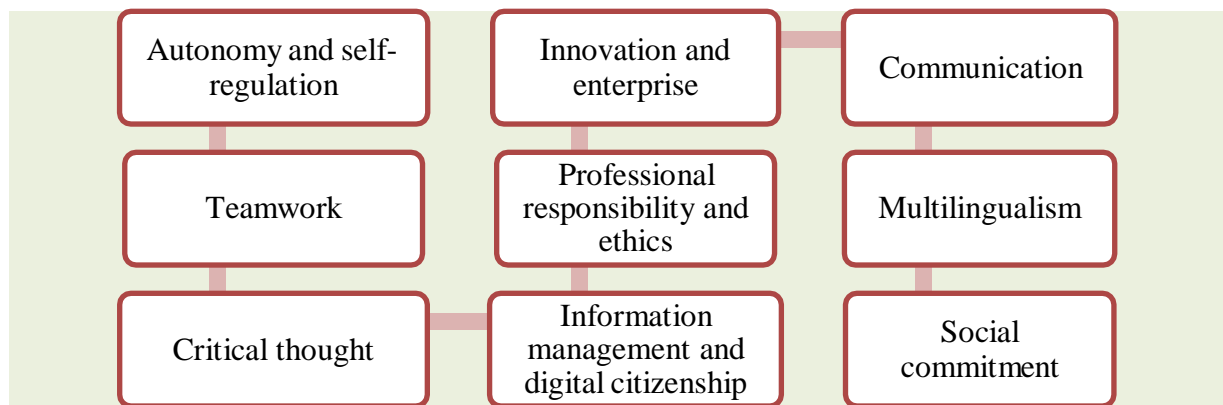


Diagram 2. Transversal competencies in HE sustainability

Earlier in this article we pointed to another classification where we also focused on competencies connected with social behaviour and interaction as young people easily fall into the lead of current movements, as for example the issue with genders. Likewise, the authors add that “social commitment” addressing social, environmental, and economic concerns at local, national, and global levels, while upholding democratic values in today’s society. Thus, our views on more meaningful o leading TC are quite the same as both are concerned about the social realization of the students in different situations where humanism and sympathy and personal understanding are vital [7].

There is one more big research involving a number of countries’ case study reports of the Asia-Pacific region on TC matters such as Australia, Hong Kong (China), India, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam conducted under the auspices of the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP), a regional network coordinated by UNESCO Bangkok. [8] the “Key Findings” of which are explored and given in three sections as System level, School level, Teacher level where some generic issues are spotted such as “the definitional issue of a lack of understanding of TVC” or “the lack of time and resources” etc. The study concludes that additional information regarding TVC is needed, namely concerning how they develop and their usual developmental paths, as well as the extent to which training helps or alters their natural development. More information on how much TVC has the potential to influence student performance in general studies is also required. This knowledge is vital for developing acceptable and useful evaluation procedures. [8]. Transversal skills, acquired

through thought and experience, provide adaptability and dynamism. Furthermore, specific competencies compatible to industrial needs are highly valued in the labor market [9].

This article focuses on the transversal skills and their role or place in students' educational period and for students in general. A person is considered to be intelligent, educated, with good manners if his worldview is a complex world of general perception of his interactions with the outer world.

We have developed questionnaire for students to elaborate and analyze the students' attitude to this notion. These questions together seek to test students' comprehension and recognition of the importance of transversal skills in their academic journey. They are designed to assess students' understanding of the value of critical thinking, communication, flexibility, problem-solving, cooperation, time management, creativity, and resilience in achieving academic achievement. (some of them are: 1. To what extent do you believe that critical thinking skills contribute to academic success in university settings? 2. How important do you think communication skills are for achieving better academic outcomes in university coursework?..... 5. How strongly do you agree that students with strong transversal skills tend to perform better academically compared to those with weaker skills? 8. In your opinion, how important is creativity in enhancing academic performance in tasks that require innovative thinking and problem-solving? 9. To what extent do you agree that students who possess strong transversal skills are better equipped to handle the academic rigors of university life?) Questions and multiple answers on Likert scale were given in three languages – Kazakh, English and Russian – to let the respondents freely choose the language not limiting themselves in understanding or not understanding only one given language.

We offer to consider some results of these questions to show the essence of the answers and how the matter is disclosed. For the 5th question which was “5. How strongly do you agree that students with strong transversal skills tend to perform better academically compared to those with weaker skills?” we acquired the following results in the diagram (Diagram 3):



Diagram 3. Question 5 results

Based on the responses to question 5, the distribution of opinions regarding the correlation between strong transversal skills and academic performance is as follows:

- Strongly Disagree (Мүлдем келіспеймін): 3.3%
- Strongly Agree (Толық келісемін): 13.2%
- Disagree (Келіспеймін): 6.3%
- Neutral (Бейтарап): 45.0%
- Agree (Келісемін): 32.1%

From these results, it's evident that a considerable portion of respondents (45.0%) remain neutral regarding the statement. Meanwhile, 32.1% agree that students with strong transversal skills

tend to perform better academically compared to those with weaker skills, and 13.2% strongly agree with this assertion. Conversely, a smaller percentage of respondents (6.3%) disagree, and an even smaller percentage (3.3%) strongly disagree. In Table 1 we offer resummed the answers of students.

Table 1

Concluding results of Q5			
Neutral	Stance	Significant Agreement:	Minor Disagreement:
Dominates:	The largest proportion of respondents remained neutral on the topic, indicating uncertainty or lack of a clear opinion regarding the correlation between transversal skills and academic performance.	Despite the prevalence of neutrality, a notable percentage of respondents agree or strongly agree that strong transversal skills contribute to better academic performance, suggesting a recognition of the importance of these skills.	While there is some dissent, with a small percentage of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, it is comparatively less prevalent than agreement, indicating a general inclination towards recognizing the role of transversal skills in academic success.

We would also like to draw readers' attention to question 9 to also consider these results of this question. For the 9th question which was "9. To what extent do you agree that students who possess strong transversal skills are better equipped to handle the academic rigors of university life?" we acquired the following results in the diagram (Diagram 4):

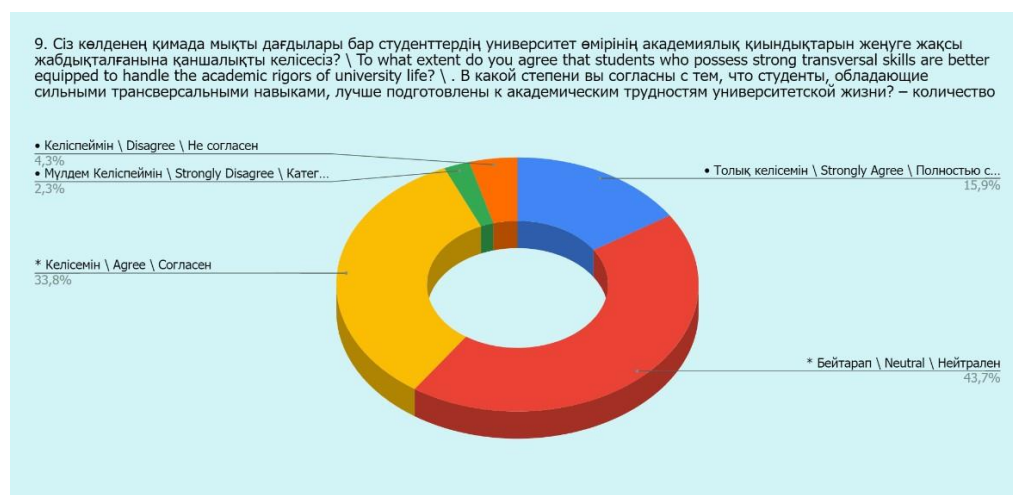


Diagram 4. Question 5 results

Based on the responses to question 9, which inquired about the extent to which respondents agree that students with strong transversal skills are better equipped to handle the academic rigors of university life, the distribution of opinions is as follows:

- Disagree (Келіспеймін): 4.3%
- Strongly Disagree (Мүлдем келіспеймін): 2.3%
- Agree (Келісемін): 33.8%
- Strongly Agree (Толық келісемін): 15.9%
- Neutral (Бейтарап): 43.7%

Table 2 also shows resummed answers of students for Q9.

Table 2

Concluding results of Q9			
Neutral	Stance	Mixed Agreement:	Minor Disagreement:
		While	

Predominates: The largest proportion of respondents, accounting for 43.7%, adopted a neutral stance on the statement, indicating a significant degree of uncertainty or lack of a clear opinion regarding the relationship between transversal skills and handling the academic challenges of university life.	neutrality is prevalent, a substantial percentage of respondents (33.8%) agree that students with strong transversal skills are better equipped to handle the academic rigors of university life. Additionally, 15.9% strongly agree with this statement, indicating a notable level of conviction in the importance of transversal skills for navigating academic challenges.	Although a smaller proportion, there are respondents who disagree (4.3%) or strongly disagree (2.3%) with the statement. However, their numbers are relatively low compared to those who express agreement or neutrality.
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The general conclusion that can be drawn from these diagrams is that transversal competencies are recognized as essential for individuals to navigate and thrive in the rapidly changing, complex, and interconnected world of the 21st century. These competencies go beyond subject-specific knowledge and skills, and are considered necessary for personal and professional growth, active citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Overall, the results suggest a varied perspective among respondents regarding the significance of transversal skills in preparing students for the academic challenges they may encounter in university life. While there is a notable level of agreement, a substantial portion remains undecided or neutral on the matter.

Evaluating students' replies allows to obtain insights into their understanding of these skills and customize interventions to help them develop. The prediction indicated that a greater recognition and cultivation of transversal abilities might lead to increased academic achievement, better preparedness for future difficulties, and overall success in university and beyond.

To sum up the work we can point the following:

- ✓ Teachers play a pivotal role in guiding students towards acquiring transversal competences. Beyond imparting subject-specific knowledge, they serve as path leaders, facilitating students' entry into the world of knowledge and success. By patiently explaining concepts and fostering self-development rather than replacing parenting, teachers contribute significantly to students' adjustment to the educational environment.

- ✓ Transversal competences, also known as soft skills or emotional intelligence, are transferable skills essential for success across various domains and not limited to specific jobs or academic disciplines. These skills include interpersonal skills, communication, self-motivation, problem-solving, teamwork, learning, communication in foreign languages, and digital literacy.

- ✓ In higher education, transversal competences are critical for students' professional success, encompassing not only knowledge and skills but also personality traits like self-awareness, value orientation, and social interactions. These competences enable individuals to navigate rapidly changing conditions in their future professional endeavors, fostering adaptability, independence, and accountability.

- ✓ Many countries, including those in the EU, incorporate citizenship, entrepreneurship, and ICT education into their elementary and secondary education curricula, recognizing the importance of transversal competences in a knowledge-based society.

- ✓ Various research studies highlight the significance of transversal competences in education. Studies from the Asia-Pacific region underscore the need for a deeper understanding of transversal competences' developmental paths, their influence on student performance, and the efficacy of training in fostering these skills.

✓ Surveys and questionnaires conducted among students reveal mixed opinions regarding the correlation between transversal skills and academic performance. While a significant proportion recognizes the importance of these skills, neutrality persists among some respondents, indicating a need for further awareness and understanding.

✓ Implications for Education: Evaluating students' responses provides insights into their comprehension and recognition of transversal skills' importance. Tailoring interventions to develop these skills could enhance academic achievement, better prepare students for future challenges, and contribute to their overall success in university and beyond.

In summary, transversal competences are indispensable for students' holistic development and success in the modern educational landscape, requiring concerted efforts from educators, policymakers, and students themselves to cultivate and integrate these skills effectively.

These results of the survey illustrate different frameworks or conceptualizations of transversal competencies, which are cross-cutting skills, abilities, and attributes that are considered important for success in various domains, such as personal and professional life, citizenship, and lifelong learning.

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