

Adult education and lifelong learning as the basis of social and employment path of the modern man

La educación de adultos y el aprendizaje permanente como base de la vía social y laboral del hombre moderno

Evgeniya Valerievna SHUBENKOVA [1](#); Svetlana Vladimirovna BADMAEVA [2](#); Nikolai Nikolaevich GAGIEV [3](#); Ekaterina Andreevna PIROZHENKO [4](#)

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ABSTRACT:

The article presents the analysis of international tendencies of the development of continuous education system. It briefly reviews the research literature on the topic of establishment and development of continuous education worldwide and in Russia. In exploring the international experience, the authors studied the main directions of continuous adult education development in the European Union and presented the statistical data about the structure and dynamics of adult students in the European Union countries. The article also explores the problems and the perspectives of the development of the normative and legal basis of the continuous education system in the Russian Federation. It describes the specifics of professional development in people of middle and older age. In conclusion, it proposes teaching methods, which are necessary to use in the process of adult education.

Keywords: Human capital; Lifelong learning; Adult education; Teaching methods; Professional development.

RESUMEN:

El artículo presenta el análisis de las tendencias internacionales del desarrollo del sistema de educación continua. Breve revisión de la literatura de investigación sobre el tema del establecimiento y desarrollo de la educación continua en todo el mundo y en Rusia. Al explorar la experiencia internacional, los autores estudiaron las principales orientaciones del desarrollo continuo de la educación de adultos en la Unión Europea y presentaron los datos estadísticos sobre la estructura y dinámica de los estudiantes adultos en los países de la Unión Europea. El artículo también explora los problemas y las perspectivas del desarrollo de la base normativa y jurídica del sistema de educación continua en la Federación de Rusia. Describe las especificidades del desarrollo profesional en personas de edad media y avanzada. En conclusión, propone métodos de enseñanza, que son necesarios para utilizar en el proceso de educación de adultos.

Keywords: Capital humano; El aprendizaje permanente; Educación de adultos; Métodos de enseñanza; Desarrollo profesional.

1. Introduction

The change of educational goals from “learning for the whole life” to “lifelong learning” (LLL) and the need to learn both interdisciplinary and adjacent specialties for a successful career, on the one hand, facilitates, and on the other hand, requires flexibility in getting an education. There is an obvious tendency to change the structure of educational institutions, educational courses, models and forms of obtaining an education, which allow creating the conditions for actualization students’ individual skills and capabilities.

We find the following questions within the addressed issue to be significant for discussion: development of the efficient mechanisms of realizing the continuous adult education system in the Russian Federation in various directions and educational profiles; development of the mechanisms of organizing adult education process; its provision with staff and infrastructure; acquisition of additional “informal” education, etc.

Currently, professional learning is a necessary condition for actualizing one’s own professional potential for a modern person throughout his/her whole life. In Russia, the researchers focus mostly on studying the paradigm, the idea, technologies, methods and forms of lifelong education.

At the end of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century, along with the complication of professional activity as a result of the rapid development of scientific and technical progress, the question of continuous education for adults, who had long passed the age of students, became acute. This is related to the fact that knowledge and skills, which were acquired in childhood and youth, become morally outdated in a couple of decades. Hence, a need to develop a new approach to teaching an adult person occurred.

The study of the problem of creating and developing the continuous education system shows that the idea of “lifelong learning” originated from the philosophical works of Confucius, Socrates, Aristotle, Solon, Plato, Seneca (*Zinchenko 1998*). During the 1950-1960s, the paradigm of continuous education spread and gain a special popularity and significance. As a consequence, the first definition of the “lifelong learning” concept appeared, and its characteristics and specifics were defined. For example, the development of the theoretical bases of lifelong learning were addressed by such well-known national economists and sociologists, as G.P. Zinchenko (1998), V.G. Onushkin (1995), V.N. Obukhov (1996), A. P. Vladislavlev (1978), V.N. Turchenko (1983), and others. A significant contribution to the development of theoretical and methodical statements in the field of lifelong learning was made by international scientists I. Faure, P. Shulka, F. Gessup, H. Vries, and others (*Herman, 2012*). In 1965, the paradigm of LLL was presented in UNESCO by a well-known theoretical scientist P. Lengrand (1996); its essence consisted of well-rounded development of person’s skills during his whole life. At the modern stage of the development of the problem of adult lifelong learning, there are numerous publications on peer-reviewed issues and conference abstracts books. In turn, international organizations prepared analytical reports on this problem, including “Global report on adult learning and education” (UNESCO) (2009), “Education for All 2000-2015.: achievements and challenges” (UNESCO) (2015), “Education at a Glance. OECD indicators” (annual report, OECD) (2016), “Lifelong learning and adults” (OECD) (2012), etc.

The aim of the study is to analyze the vectors of development of the continuous adult education system in the Russian Federation and to develop theoretical bases and methodological approaches to developing continuous economic education of adults in the professional education system in Russia.

2. Methods

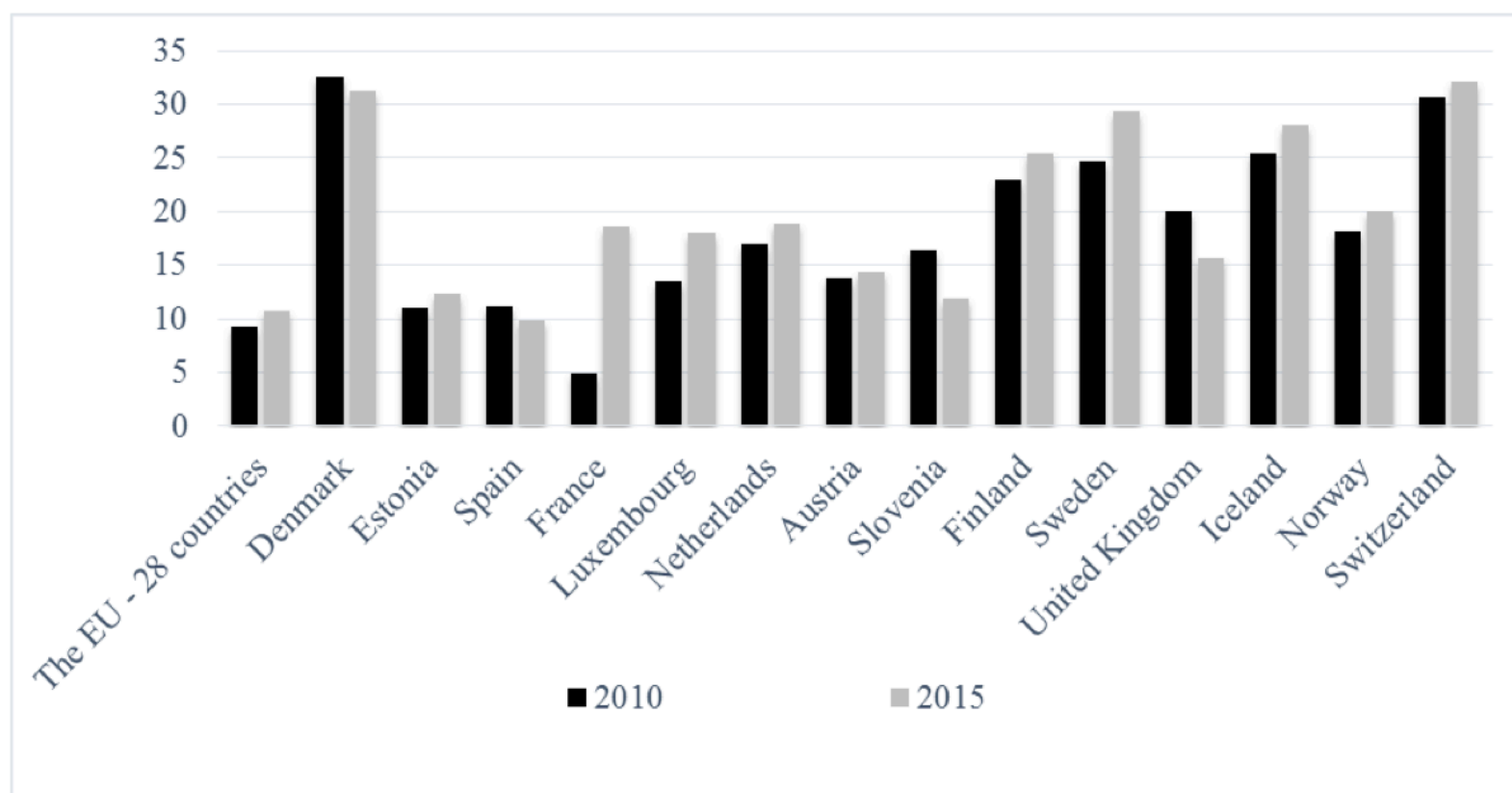
During the conduction of the study, we used the methods of economic, statistical and comparative analysis, logical rationalization, and calculative analysis. The combination of the used methodological basis allowed providing the validity of the conclusions.

3. Main results and discussion

The problem of continuous adult education, its quality and teaching methods is significant and is discussed worldwide. According to the strategic program of the European Union “Learning and education 2020”, 15% of the population among 25-64 years in the European Union countries have to be involved in the lifelong learning programs by 2020 9 *Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), 2014*). Along with that, the “Updated European program of adult education” states the fulfillment of the following goals by 2020:

- Growth of private and governmental investments in education;
- Increased number and improved quality of the proposed educational programs for adults;
- Increased availability of education, including introduction of flexible forms of education, such as distance learning, for adult education;
- Development of methodical approaches to evaluating the quality of the provided educational services in adult education (*European Commission*).

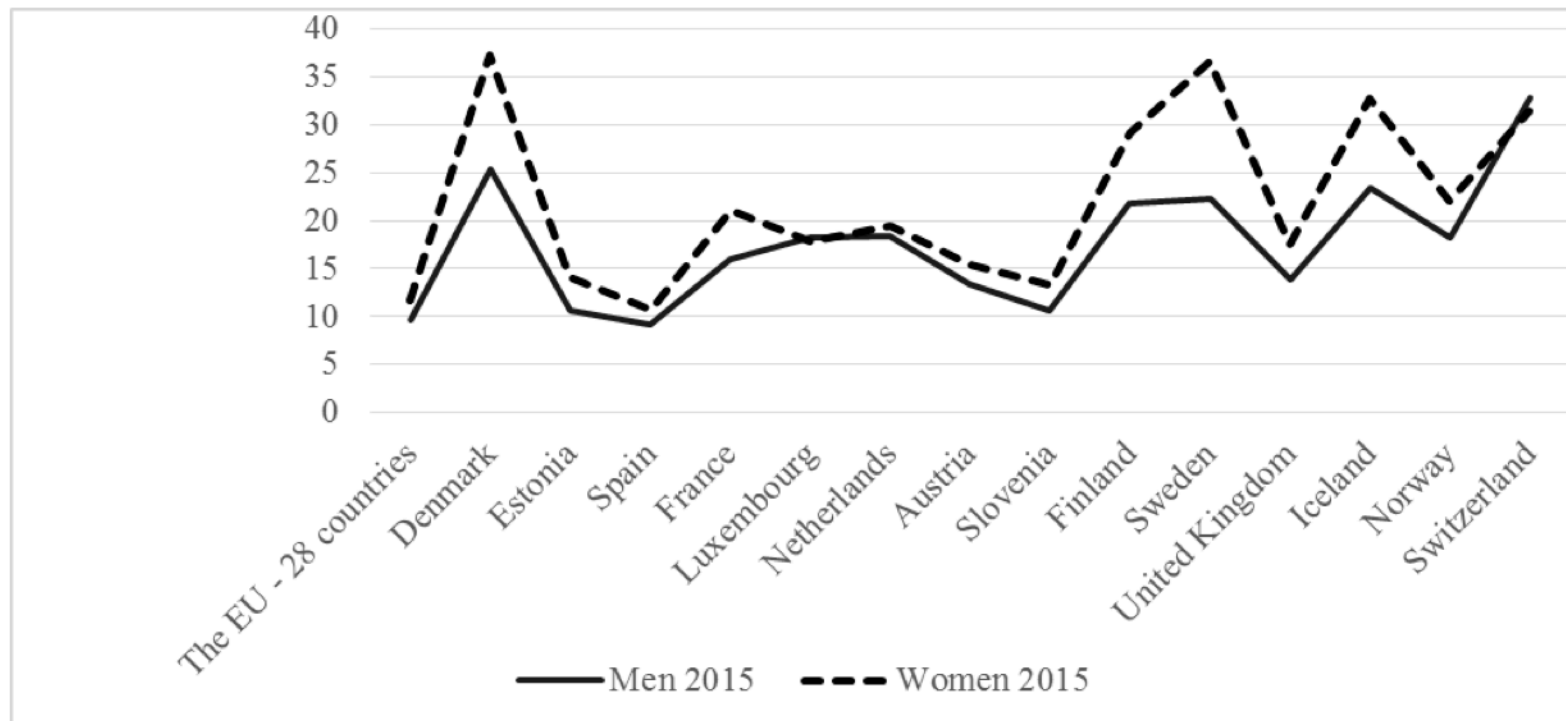
According to the statistical data of Eurostat, in the European Union countries, there is a growth in the population from 25 to 64 years of age that are learning in the educational programs of professional education and professional development (Figure 1). Moreover, among the students in the European Union countries, there is a higher proportion of women – 11.7%, compared to 9.7% of men (by 2015) (Figure 2).



Note: created by the authors according to (*Eurostat*).

Figure 1. Lifelong learning (2010 and 2015) (% of population in the age of 25-64 that participate in the programs of education and professional development in the European Union countries)

The highest number of students, who study in the educational programs and professional development courses, is observed in the following EU countries: Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Island, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, France, Luxemburg and Great Britain (Figure 2).



Note: created by the authors according to (Eurostat).

Figure 2. Dynamics of the number of men and women, who study or attend professional development courses (% of the population among 25 and 65 years, who participate in educational programs and professional development in the EU)

According to the sociological studies, in the United States of America, 73% of the population are involved in the lifelong learning; moreover, 36% of the adults annually attend professional development courses and trainings (Horrigan, n. d.)

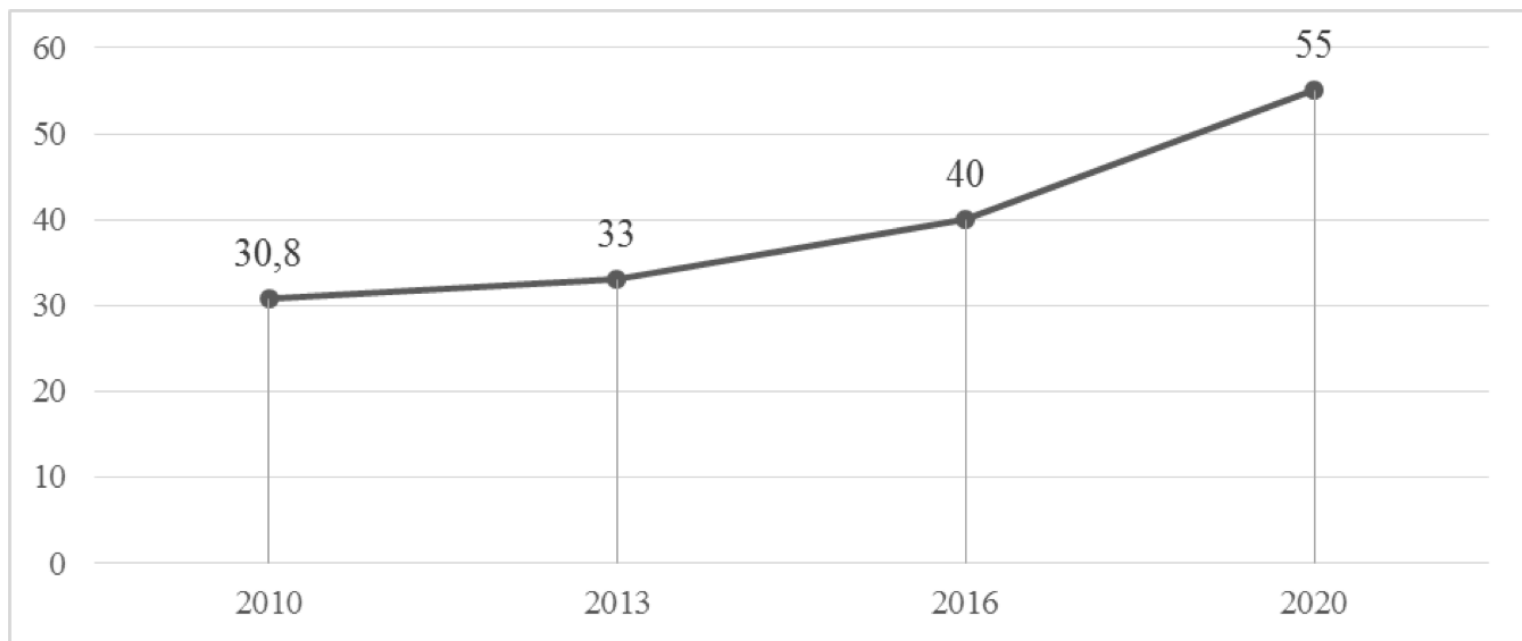
In the Russian Federation, normative and legal basis of the lifelong education system consists of a number of key documents that define the strategy of this system's development. Furthermore, it is important to point out that, on the official level, the transition to lifelong education occurred less than 10 years ago, i.e. in this aspect, the country is faced with a large amount of work for levelling the normative basis with the general European standards (table 1).

Table 1. Normative documents that contain the statements about lifelong learning development in Russia

Normative document	Statements about lifelong learning development
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the measures for realizing state social policy" #597 from 07.05.2012.	c. 1a – increase of the number of highly-qualified employees, in order for it to be equal to at least one third of the number of qualified employees by 2020.
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the measures for realizing state policy in the field of education and science" #599 from 07.05.2012.	c. 1a – increase of the proportion of the employed population in the age from 25 to 65 that completed professional development courses and (or) professional training within the total amount of employed population in the field of economy of the population in this age group to 37 percent by 2015.
Paradigm of long-term social-economic development of the Russian Federation in the period up to 2020 (est. by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 17th of November 2008. #1662-r).	c. III. Development of human potential, p. 4. Development of education.

<p>Strategy of innovative development of the Russian Federation in the period up to 2020, established by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 8th of December 2011. #2227-r.</p>	<p>c. 2. Main goals of the Strategy – adaptation of the education system in order to develop in the population from the childhood the knowledge, competencies, skills and models of behavior, necessary for the innovative society; as well as development of lifelong education system.</p> <p>c. V. Development of the innovative activity competencies.</p> <p>1. Education</p> <p>One of the main aims of innovative development is creation of the conditions for developing the following innovative activity competencies in the citizens:</p> <p>Ability and readiness for lifelong learning, constant perfection, re-education and self-education, professional mobility, urge to novelty, etc.</p>
<p>State program of the Russian Federation “Development of Education” for 2013-2020, established by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 15th of April 2014. #295.</p>	<p>Aims of the Program – development of flexible lifelong learning system, which is accountable to the society and which develops human potential and supports current and prospective needs of social-economic development of the Russian Federation.</p>
<p>Federal target program of education development for 2016-2020, established by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 23rd of May 2015, #497 (within the state program “Development of Education” for 2013-2020).</p>	<p>III. Measures of the Program and comprehensive projects that provide the realization of the aims</p> <p>1.3 “Modernization of the lifelong education (additional professional education) system through the realization of the pilot projects of the regions and colleges, development of open educational resources, expansion of the results of the pilot projects and resources”.</p>
<p>Letter from the Russian Ministry of Education and Science from 26.12.2013 #AK-3076/06 “On the direction of methodical recommendations”, which contains “Methodical recommendations on stimulating and supporting lifelong learning in the regions of the Russian Federation”.</p>	<p>This document states the normative and legal bases of the development of lifelong education system and the indicators of monitoring the development of lifelong education system; it provides examples of the created interdepartmental coordinating units, which efficiently regulate the system of lifelong education development in various regions of Russia.</p>

One of the most important documents in this list is the “Strategy of innovative development of the Russian Federation in the period up to 2020”. According to this strategy, the proportion of the population involved in lifelong education, among the respondents from 25 to 64 years of age, has to amount to 55% up to 2020; moreover, this number already exceeds the same characteristic in Europe (on average), as well as the same characteristic in the leading Scandinavian countries (Figure 3).



Note: created by the authors.

Figure 3. Proportion of the population involved in lifelong education, among the respondents from 25 to 64 years of age, percent, 2010-2020.

The necessity of the present study is also explained by the active development of the national system of professional qualifications in Russia. In June 2016 the Federal law "On independent evaluation of qualification" #238-FZ from 03.07.2016 was passed. Passing the law confirms the need to develop flexible and efficient system of employees' continuous education throughout their work life, in order to constantly gain contemporary professional knowledge, skills and abilities for successful passing of the procedure of independent evaluation of employee's or candidate's qualification for the coherence with the professional standards' requirements.

The authors think that, in order to fulfill the goals of lifelong education as efficiently as possible, it is necessary to divide the adults upon age groups (generations), because different age groups have specific needs for learning, different range of educational needs, etc. Social science separates three age groups: from 18 to 25, from 25 to 45 and over 45 years of age.

The first category is divided into two groups – people who have and do not have professional education. Therefore, the first ones have to be provided with such education in order for them to be involved in professional activity, while the second ones have to be provided with an opportunity to expand the knowledge they already have upon transitioning to the second category.

The second category has professional education and work experience; professional development and actualization of intellectual and professional potential are relevant to it. They have to be provided with the conditions for increasing the professional level.

The third category, despite achieving certain social and professional status, also requires constant learning, adaptive by nature; however, in many cases, this learning is impossible without the interaction with first and second categories, which contains mutual teaching.

For each category, it is necessary to establish the required goals, approaches and teaching methods, and to define the interaction between employees of different categories – for example, by establishing mentoring relationships.

According to the statements described above, we will define the specifics of teaching people of middle and older age.

Specifics of professional development for people of middle and older age (35 years and older):

- A person of this age, who studies – a student (not a teacher) has the leading role in the educational process;
- Being a well-developed personality, he sets concise education goals for himself and strives for self-sufficiency, self-actualization and self-regulation;

- A person from 35 years of age and older has professional and life experience, knowledge, abilities and skills, which should be used in the educational process;
- He searches to apply knowledge and abilities, obtained during learning, as soon as possible;
- Educational process is largely defined by temporal, spatial, domestic, professional and social factors, which either limit or facilitate it;
- Educational process is organized in form of cooperative activity of student and teacher on all of its stages;
- Adult students learn from each other's experience;
- This category of students does not have a goal of radically changing their professional field and is certain of what they need.

The problems of working with this age group often occur for teachers-theorists, because their competence is being checked during the discussion of practical and operational questions. For some teachers, the audience is too experience and, to some extent, is "spoiled" by the reality of work.

Because of this, one of the main approaches in any successful educational program for professional development of people of this age is the use of the combination of different teaching methods for reaching the goal.

We propose a list of teaching methods, which have to be necessarily used during the process of teaching adults; it consists of letters **K, U, S, V, or A**, which label the teaching method that is suitable for using during the fulfillment of the educational goal. This method can be suitable for more than one educational goal.

K (knowledge)= Knowledge/Awareness

U (understanding)= Understanding

S (skills)= Skills/Behavior

V (value)= Evaluation/Priorities

A (attitude)= Attitude

We would like to highlight certain optimal teaching methods for professional development of an older-aged person, which are thoroughly described in table 2: home reading task, brainstorm, brief discussion groups ("buzz groups"), studying certain situations, small knowledge circles, contracts – study contract, study journal, discussion – discussion, lecture.

Table 2. Methods of teaching adult population

Letter	Method	Content of the method
K, U	Home reading task	The aim of home reading has to be clear to the students, and it has to be followed by a group discussion. One of the disadvantages of the home reading task is that fact that many adults do not have time or do not want to spend their personal time on additional reading.
K	Brainstorm	The aim of this method is to collect as many ideas or solutions to the problem as possible within the given time. Brainstorm is an excellent technique for revealing creativity both in small and large groups.
K, U, V	Brief discussion groups ("buzz groups")	Discussion groups are useful upon transferring the discussions to the large groups. When using this

		<p>method, a teacher has to make the goal of the discussion group clear by writing down the problem or the discussed question. This method can be useful as a warm-up, in order to let people know each other in small groups. Discussion group is most useful in situations that require fast reaction in a simple task. It is also much better for raising the problem than for solving them.</p>
U, V, A	Studying certain situations	<p>By studying a certain case, members of the group can be presented with written information about a real-life situation; in turn, members of the group can analyze various aspects of the problem and propose the solutions. It is possible to use case study on individual or group basis. The participants learn to analyze the situation, propose a good working solution and understand the main problems involved in this situation.</p>
K, U, V, A	Small knowledge circles	<p>This teaching method is useful for a small group of twelve participants, or less, by providing all group members with an opportunity to present their thoughts and ideas on the subject. The participants have to seat in a circle facing each other, in order to hear everyone. The leader has to present a group with a question and ask it such way that it is not possible to answer yes or no. Then, he asks each participant to explain his/hers point of view, feelings and opinions. In order to use to use this technique successfully, all group members have to feel calm during the presentation of their ideas.</p>
S	Contracts – study contract	<p>This is a simple, yet defined, agreement, which highlights mutual expectations between teacher and students. Its value is rooted in its formality; in this case, the behavior is considered important, fair and possible. The contract has to specifically highlight the goals that have to be reached, to agree on the steps for reaching the goal, on the time in which the goal would be reached; it is also necessary to reach a mutual agreement about the consequences in case if the goal will not be reached. Both sides have to sign the contract and write the date of the contract. The contract imposes large responsibility on a student but has a clear advantage of precisely defined expectations.</p>
K, U, V, A	Discussion - discussion	<p>This is a method of cooperative acquisition of knowledge, ideas and opinions about the subject with the aim of learning new information and solving the problem. Efficient discussion requires</p>

		adequate training, probably even more than other teaching strategies.
U, S, V, A	Study journal	Study journal can be used to help the students to track the experience that they obtained during a course or a seminar. The written material can be stored individually, or the students can be encouraged to share their notes with the whole group. The notes can include impressions, experiences, discoveries and questions that occur during learning.
K, U	Lecture	Lecture method is probably the teaching method that is most familiar for adults. Lecture is one of the most common teaching technique. Most likely, this happens because of the fact that its use is often the easiest for a teacher; it is the most convenient method for them.

In order to increase the efficiency of the results of middle- and older-aged students after they completed professional education, they can be involved as “mentors”, “senior specialists”, “teachers” or “consultants” in the work with young and middle-aged employees.

Currently in Russia, Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the scientific community have developed the project of the “Paradigm of developing continuous adult education in the Russian Federation up to 2025”. The main expected results of realizing the Paradigm are: increase of the population’s quality of life; strengthening of social stability in the community; development of human capital of the country; increase of competitiveness of the adult population (*Alkhimenko, et. al. 2014*).

4. Conclusion

Acquisition of lifelong education by adults becomes a basic condition for developing and realizing social and employment path of a modern person. In correspondence with above said, we think that further scientific study is required for the questions related to developing the mechanisms of continuous professional education for adults, developing of infrastructure and technologies in the field of adult education, perfecting the forms and methods of teaching the adults. As the study showed, European countries demonstrate a robust tendency of increasing number of students in educational programs and programs of professional education. The highest proportion of students is observed in Benelux, Scandinavian countries, as well as in France and Great Britain. All of these countries have rather high level of economic development, which can explain such high proportion of students. In the Russian Federation, the number of people participating in lifelong education is much higher than the European average, however, this characteristic does not consider the division of the population into groups, which does not allow making a definitive conclusion about the efficiency and significance of the acquired education for a certain population group. Because of this, we suggest using the individualized approach for teaching people of older age, because this category of the population requires a combination of different teaching methods in order to reach the goal.

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1. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 117997, Russian Federation, Moscow, Stremyanny lane, 3
 2. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 117997, Russian Federation, Moscow, Stremyanny lane, 3
 3. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 117997, Russian Federation, Moscow, Stremyanny lane, 3
 4. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 117997, Russian Federation, Moscow, Stremyanny lane, 3
- Contact Email: vokatemoscow@mail.ru
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