

METHODOLOGICAL FEATURES OF LIFE-LONG PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND PEDAGOGICAL PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

The lifelong learning theory examines professional development of all those working in community learning and development, further education, higher education, and work based learning. The lifelong professional development can be understood as a an organized purposeful process aimed at the raising the level of professional skills by improving professional competences in compliance with the new social-and-economical, technological and/ or international requirements and standards. However, not much research currently exists on the process of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel. The goal of this study was to examine methodological bases of life-long professional development model of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel on the general scientific, specific scientific and methodological-and-technological levels. Research indicates that integration of the andragogical approach, the competence-based approach and the modular approach into pedagogical conceptual model in educational practice of Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University provided a significantly positive development of lifelong advanced training. These results provide general support for lifelong professional development hypothesis.

JEL CLASSIFICATION & KEYWORDS

■ I20 ■ I21 ■ Lifelong learning ■ Andragogy ■ Professional development ■ Educational practices

INTRODUCTION

Adoption of lifelong learning defines the problem of modernization of professional development and advanced training system. Modern pedagogical institutions for training and retraining personnel require highly skilled specialists who are mobile and competitive in educational labor market, as well as formation of the infrastructure lifelong professional development of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel.

The conceptual bases for development and implementation of lifelong professional development model devised at Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University (CSPU) provides fresh opportunities for progression to higher education for vocational and work-based learners, supporting vocational education, learner development and lifelong learning as well as permanent adaptation to changing conditions, improvement of businesslike competences [3].

This article aims at examining the integration of the andragogical approach, the competence-based approach and the modular approach into pedagogical conceptual model of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel.

Some notions on the andragogy as a process

The Andragogical approach as a general scientific basis of the research allows viewing educational process in the system of lifelong professional development as a means of individual's ability to self-organization, self-regulation, and self-actualization.

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Andragogy - initially a term coined by the German teacher Alexander Kapp - implements an ancient formula for learning: *non scholae, sed vitae discimus* - learn not for school, but for life. Currency of andragogy is caused by labour market requirements, which demand competent and highly skilled professionals. These circumstances favour the further development of lifelong advanced training and retraining courses.

Traditionally, andragogy (or adult education) is the practice of teaching and educating adults. Adult education takes place in the workplace, through 'extension' school or 'school of continuing education'. Other learning places include community colleges, folk high schools, and lifelong learning centers. The practice is also often referred to as 'Training and Development' and is often associated with workforce or professional development [1].

Malcolm S. Knowles, one of the leading authorities on adult education in the second half of the twentieth century, is famous for his adaptation of the theory of Andragogy as a conceptual basis for adult education and learning, and was a significant force in reorienting adult educators from 'educating people' to 'helping them learn' [5].

The basic concepts of the andragogical approach are an andragogue (an adult educator), an adult learner, adult education, self-realization/ self-actualization. The derivative concepts are andragogical educational model and andragogical training [4].

The andragogical approach examines the regularities, social and psychological factors of effective adult education and learning, adult teaching methods. The peculiarities of adult education are predetermined by adults' moulded character and shaped outlook, rich life experience, cultural, educational and professional demands, predominance of self-education, self-realization, etc.

The andragogical approach, based on humanitarian concept of autonomous learners and educators-facilitators, is oriented towards integrity, subject-subject interaction, and synergetic methodology. The given approach allows specifying aim of the pedagogical concept of lifelong professional development, its contents, principles, regularities.

The andragogical process of lifelong professional development presents a specifically designed process aimed to facilitate in-house professional training of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel. While implementing the educational process of adult learning and interaction the scientific-and-pedagogical personnel consolidate the following androgogue role functions: a consultant, a supervisor, a moderator and a facilitator.

The role of the competence-based approach

The competence-based approach as a specific scientific basis of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel puts the ability to solve problems in the forefront while general awareness is considered less significant.

A competence is often defined as an ability to solve problems and readiness for professional function whereas the major competence indicator might be a standard of conformity of individual performance to specific employer's expectations connected with the professional activity.

The main notion of competence-based approach is 'an educational domain', while the andragogue's competence is represented by a diverse range of domains and each domain is formed as a specific function (aspect) of a future professional activity. For instance, when training pedagogical, scientific and pedagogical personnel, the following educational domains are used: domain of designing an educational programmes and methods of teaching, domain of assessment and measurements, domain of informational integration (including IT), domain of management and innovative activity, and domain of research activity.

Then each of these domains is stated in more concrete terms on two or more levels. Particularly, on the next level we single out types of activity and the problems which adult learners should be ready to solve (making of systems, assessment of achievements, planning of the results, etc.). Then certain actions and properties are registered which are required for successful professional activity: to define, to interpret, to compare, to design, to implement, to integrate, to control, etc. In conclusion of competence description it is suggested to define a professional competence scale: a novice, a user, an experienced user, a professional, an expert, etc. [2]

The competence assessment includes a regulatory model of diagnosing procedures to organize practical certifying procedures. The competence assessment implies priority usage of objective methods of diagnosing professional activity, such as observation, experts' examination, defense of a portfolio or a graduation project, etc.

The categorical apparatus of the competence-based approach is directly linked to the idea of purposefulness of lifelong professional development process in which competences specify highest, integrated level of skills of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel, while educational content is identified by a four-component structure.

The competence-based model of scientific-and pedagogical personnel in the lifelong professional development system is presented as a four-level structure:

- key competences (axiological, cultural, cognitive, informational, communicative, socio-working, self-perfection);
- general professional competences (didactic, andragogic (adult education), professional culture, behavioral, managerial, legal, self-educational);
- professional competences (technological, designing, researching, logistical and productive pedagogical);
- subject competences (particular professional competences which are topical in the network of specific educational refresher courses).

The role of the modular approach

The modular approach as a methodological-and-technological basis of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel allows each adult learner an independent choice of individual educational route and self-evaluation of the results.

The modular approach in lifelong professional development system presents a special adult education organization process in which modular structure is a means of successful

continuous advanced training. The core of modular learning is a module/or a unit which includes a complete unit of information, target/special-purpose programme, recommendations of an andragogue-facilitator for successful realization of refresher courses.

A modular learning involves a target component, key principles, special methods of projecting educational contents, a system of tasks and exercises, construction of didactic materials, rating system for control and assessment of educational achievement. According to module/unit characteristics an adult learner can build an individual educational route, choose his own order of educational units, pace of learning, form of learning (full-time courses, correspondence courses, distance learning, etc.)

Conclusion

Our devised pedagogical concept of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel is based upon andragogy (adult education) theory, lifelong/continuous learning as well as the integration of the above mentioned andragogical, competence-based, and modular approaches.

The strategic aim of the devised andragogical model is the formation of lifelong professional development at CSPU as a means of facilitating management of professional development and self-development of scientific-and professional personnel throughout their professional pedagogical activity.

It has been suggested to single out the following goals [6]:

1. Improvement of professional skills and academic mobility of scientific-and-professional personnel.
2. Renewal of the contents of professional development and advanced training on the basis of the priority scientific, technical and technological areas.
3. Flexible response of professional development system to the requirements of competent and competitive scientific-and-pedagogical personnel.

In the devised conceptual model of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel the status of an adult learner as a combined criterion of advanced training effectiveness is described by three levels [3]:

- the first level – "starting actualization";
- the second level – "innovative inclusion of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel into lifelong professional development system";
- the third level – "programme-targeted facilitating management of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel".

On the first level ("starting actualization") scientific-and-professional personnel increment their knowledge, assimilate the experience of projecting educational activity, carry out professional self-development, test adult education technologies, improve their methodical portfolio. On the given level an adult learner implements the principles of andragogical educational model – during the process of the regular advanced training an adult learner not only plays the key role in the lifelong professional development process but aspires to become active participant in this process.

On the second level ("innovative inclusion of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel into lifelong professional development system") an adult learner aspires to self-realization and self-actualization of his professional mobility as well as self-management while designing studies or

author's refresher courses and thus he is able to improve his professional qualities of an andragogue/adult educationalist.

On the third level ("programme-targeted facilitating management of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel") scientific-and-pedagogical personnel become organizers of author (problem-oriented) refresher courses and acquires the status of an andragogue-facilitator. Having implemented this level an educationalist is ready to carry out andragogical activity of an organizer/coordinator of lifelong professional development of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel.

The qualitative transition of scientific-and-pedagogical personnel from one level to another ensures their lifelong professional self-development as a competent and competitive highly skilled specialist at up-to-date educational services market and at the same time is the main criterion of an effective lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel.

Therefore, the formation and implementation lifelong professional development model of scientific-and-professional personnel contributes to the following:

- firstly, in-house advanced training (without discontinuing work), which is being carried out continuously throughout the whole professional career on the first level of professional development system;
- secondly, ensuring the maintenance and socio-pedagogical support of their professional activity;
- thirdly, development of the academic mobility, realization of their professional and managing competences on the second and third levels of the devised lifelong professional development of scientific-and-professional personnel.

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