

IFTE 2019
5th International Forum on Teacher Education

**CONTINUOUS PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION IN NORTH-
EASTERN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY: VECTORS OF
DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

The article discusses the topical issues of developing continuing professional education in North-Eastern Federal University in conditions of ongoing changes and in line with the global trends. The global trends today include the accelerating rate of social development, globalisation, total digitalisation, increased competition, increasing mobility of people and expanding opportunities, massification of education (growing share of learners in universities in all age categories, regions and countries), cognitive revolution (growing scale of intellectual activity), creation of new ways of thinking and creativity. The distinctive feature that can ensure the competitiveness of continuing professional education in NEFU is its focus on learners and professional context within the framework of introduction of the National System of Qualifications. Today it is possible to say with confidence that people understand and are aware of the objective necessity and subjective need for lifelong education. However, for Yakutia, with its vast territory and unique geographic and climatic conditions, the vital issue of improving the quality and accessibility of continuing professional education for adults, including various diverse categories such as idle and unemployed citizens, requires further research and a search for solution.

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Keywords: Continuing professional education, lifelong education, adult education, federal university, global trends.



1. Introduction

More and more articles are published nowadays on the issue of developing education in the face of global challenges. What is meant by this? First of all, this refers to the deep changes in the world view and perception of the world by people, brought about by processes that are taking place in the context of a civilization-wide shift to a new state, accompanied by significant transformation of social values (Glazachev, 2018). We have previously written (Mikhailova & Chorosova, 2017) that in the modern, rapidly changing world the global trends affect all spheres of society, as well as the social and economic development of states, including processes in education and educational systems: multiple changes in “professional careers” throughout a person’s life, the requirement for lifelong education (continuing learning), etc. (Volkov, 2016). The global trends today include the accelerating rate of social development, globalisation (globalisation of markets, include markets of knowledge, technologies, innovations, education etc), total digitalisation (expanding use of digital technologies in all spheres of human life and activities, digitalisation of education), increased competition (intensification of competition, including competition in education), increasing mobility of people and expanding opportunities (growing potential of people and opportunities for them to choose their own place and way of work and education), massification of education (growing share of learners in universities in all age categories, regions and countries), cognitive revolution (growing scale of intellectual activity), creation of new ways of thinking and creativity. There is no doubt that these processes require fundamental changes in education systems, including the system of continuous adult education.

2. Problem Statement

Considering the above, it is necessary to define the principal vectors of development of continuing professional education in NEFU, taking into account global and local trends, as well as challenges posed by them.

3. Research Questions

Digitalisation of education can give to the society massive resources for developing human capacity and improving quality of life. However, the principal focus should not be on information and communication technologies nor on digital educational devices, but on a “person as a triune of spirit, soul and body, who has unlimited potential for improving the quality of education, and with its help, of the quality of life of the person and the society” (Verbitsky, 2018, p.128). In relation to this, in conditions of global digitalisation and, at the same time, complete lack of specialists that have the necessary skills for using digital technologies, the federal university should become a centre of continuing education and improvement of digital competencies, which do not have definitions at the moment, but can be considered as soft skills and functional literacy. The advantage of institutes of continuing professional education is that they, reacting to all changes in a flexible and timely manner, and having the needed intellectual and technical resources, can train in a short time the necessary specialists that would have the required competencies and skills for eliminating professional deficits (Chorosova, Gerasimova, & Solomonova, 2017). This is true for the Institute of Continuing Professional Education of NEFU as well, which has over

180 employees of the federal university among its staff of educators. The WEB-Department educational portal and technical resources of the ICPE NEFU are more than enough to hold online webinars, organise conference calls, and conduct defence of graduate qualification works of students who reside in remote and hard-to-access regions of Yakutia. One of the priority tasks is to expedite the development of digital learning, including the development and introduction of mass open online courses, completely or partially free for the learners, in order to ensure the mass character and accessibility of continuing professional education as part of the social responsibility of the federal university.

According to the theory of contextual education of Verbitsky (2018), using the whole system of both new and traditional pedagogical technologies in the educational activities of young and adult students consistently models the subject-technology, social, and moral content of their professional activities. As the results of a study among the educators of Yakutia and Kazakhstan in 2015-2017 show, the subjective evaluation by educators of their professional and personal well-being is closely related to the evaluation of their quality of life, which is formed under the influence of many factors. One of the more important ones is the world view component, more notably, the understanding by educators of the meaning of their professional activities in the context of personal existence. In relation to this, on the example of educators, it is possible to say that the most important tasks of continuing professional education should be the strengthening of its spiritual and moral aspects, as well as the realisation of the context of social and moral content of professional activities of adult learners. It is necessary to note that within the framework of introduction of the National System of Qualifications and Professional Standards this specific point is extremely important, as the nominal bringing of programmes of continuing professional education for advanced training and professional retraining into compliance with the requirements of professional standards will not be completely effective if there is no systemic approach in all divisions of the university that are implementing the programmes of continuing professional education, aimed at ensuring the above contextual approach, as well as personal, social, and moral components of continuing professional education.

The third vector of development is the creation in the university of an effective model of developing adult education, which would ensure the promotion of employment opportunities by organising educational volunteering and cultural enlightenment initiatives on an interregional level, including the development and implementation of additional general development and continuing professional education programmes for the adult population, including unemployed citizens and women below the age of 23 who are on maternal leave. The project has been developed by the Institute of Continuing Professional Education of NEFU within the framework of the “Management of Modernisation Processes in Education” Science School (headed by the Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Pedagogics E.I. Mikhailova) and is aimed at ensuring the access of adults, including unemployed citizens, to education in the context of lifelong learning, which is one of the main aspects of the right for education, promoting the right of an individual to take part in political and cultural life. The humanitarian character of this project is in the notion that the education of adults as an inseparable part of lifelong learning can promote the social, economic, and cultural development, as well as the development of educational systems. The social and economic potential is in promoting the employment of adult population and in implementing the national system of qualifications and professional standards.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the basic factors that can affect the quality of continuing professional education and its development in the context of continuity as the formation of an open informational-educational environment, development of adult education in the region, and person and application focused, or, in other words, contextually professional focused continuing professional education within the framework of introduction of the National System of Qualifications in Russia and its regions

5. Research Methods

The theoretical analysis of the continuous professional education in NEFU.

6. Findings

The goal of developing the system of continuing professional education in NEFU is to ensure its higher quality, relevance, accessibility, and competitiveness on the global market of educational services through digitalisation of education. The principal directions of the strategy for developing the system of continuing professional education (CPE) in NEFU include:

1. Development and active use of scientific-pedagogical, educational-methods, organisational, legal, personnel, and material-technical capacity of the university.
2. Implementation of the marketing strategy in the CPE system of the university.
3. Ensuring the high quality of CPE services through a NEFU based cluster system of CPE that will meet the demand for highly qualified specialists in Yakutia, in conditions of ongoing changes.
4. Providing more opportunities for learners by taking into account their needs and requirements.
5. Digitalisation of educational activities.
6. Intensifying the process of introducing the results of applied research in the sphere of adult education on regional, federal and international levels.
7. Developing various types of social partnership that ensure transformation into new organisational types of cooperation.
8. Improvement of financial and economic mechanisms.

The statistics for the programmes of continuing professional education in NEFU for the year 2018 are as follows:

The total number of participants in the programmes of continuing professional education was 8,473 people, including 6,683 women (78% of the total).

60 additional programmes of professional retraining have been organised in the university with 1,176 participants.

The number of NEFU staff enrolled in the programmes was 999 people, including 989 people in additional training programmes and 10 people in professional retraining programmes.

The number of company executives and specialists was 823 people, including 725 people in additional training programmes and 98 people in professional retraining programmes.

The total number of educators enrolled in the programmes was 3,972 people, including 3,538 people in additional training programmes and 434 people in professional retraining programmes.

The number of people who studied using the technologies of e-learning was 2,107 people, including 2,013 people in additional training programmes and 94 people in professional retraining programmes.

The number of people who studied using distant learning technologies was 1,868 people, including 1,521 people in additional training programmes and 347 people in professional retraining programmes.

7. Conclusion

The goals standing before the system of continuing professional education in NEFU in the near future include the creation of an interregional educational space in the university with an aim of developing adult education and comprehensive development of human personality in conditions of rapid advancement of scientific, technical, economic and social changes; ensuring the accessibility of continuing professional education for the adult population, including unemployed citizens and women within the frames of the permanent “Open Women University” of NEFU, by developing mass open online courses, taking into account the requirements of the people, which will promote economic and social development of the whole society.

By undergoing transformational changes, the signs of which can be seen on the example of the federal university, the continuing professional education in NEFU, aimed at both the employed specialists and the adult population as a whole, should become an effective instrument for strengthening the competitiveness of employees in the labour market. Therefore, continuing professional education in the context of lifelong education has an important function as an implementor of the idea of sustainable development both of a person and the society at large.

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