

Readiness of the students to be involved in the process of longlife learning

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Abstract—The term **Longlife Learning** means constant life learning in formal learningal institutions and outside them. Nowadays the necessity to continue learning and to gain the needed skills for adaptation in the constantly changing world becomes more and more important. The article describes the results of the research conducted among students of 15 Russian universities. The purpose of the research is to evaluate the readiness of the Russian Federation university students to be involved in the process of lifelong learning to gain acute knowledge over a lifetime. The author draws the conclusion that modern students want and are ready to learn constantly to increase their professional skills but they cannot do that because this kind of learning is not available and they also lack time and financial resources. The article suggests the ways to solve the problem counting on the European experience in realization of the concept **Longlife Learning**.

Keywords—*lifelong learning; advantages; benefits; geat, concept.*

I. INTRODUCTION

New technologies, growing tempo of technological changes and globalization influence the human demands in perfect qualifications and competences. Europe acknowledged that long ago (Colardyn, D. & Bjornavold, J., 2004). The learning society is a social model which has an opportunity of learning for every human of every age and in every place [6].

Longlife learning is a constant development of skills and knowledge for human life long.

The concept of learning in the context of LongLife Learning includes not only the structured learning through school and social learning but also learning with the help of

such social spheres as sport, culture, hobby, leisure and volunteering. The places for learning are also different including primary and secondary schools, universities and other establishments of higher learning, libraries, museums, cultural objects, sport facilities etc.

Longlife Learning (LLL) covers all forms of study which include: formal and informal learning, skills, knowledge, relations, everyday behaviour [4].

The glossary Cedefop [10] defines the basic notions of various forms of learning:

Formal learning happens in organized and structured context;

Non-formal learning is incorporated in planned events which are not marked as learning but they contain its important elements, for example, professional skills.

Informal learning is an everyday activity connected with family, job or leisure. It is often called empirical learning and in some degree it may be called random learning.

LLL may have various forms and is not only a traditional learning. We all must continue learning throughout our life [5].

Longlife Learning - is a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require over a lifetime and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and in any environment [1].

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To study the readiness of the Russian university students to be involved in the process of longlife learning we made a survey spread through Google Forms. The research involved 446 students (350 girls and 146 boys) of 15 Russian universities: Moscow State University, Higher School of Economics (Saint Petersburg), Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University, Novosibirsk State Technical University, Voronezh State Technical University, Pskov State University, Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University, Perm State National Research University, Eastern Siberian State University of Technology and Management (Ulan-de), South Ural State University (Chelyabinsk), South Ural State Medical University (Chelyabinsk), South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University (Chelyabinsk), Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk State Institute of Culture, Ural State University of Physical Culture (Chelyabinsk). The average age of respondents is 21.03 ± 0.20 years old, 92.2% of them are full-time students ($n=411$) and 7.8% are correspondent students ($n=35$).

The spread of respondents over the years of learning: the first year – 156 respondents (35%), the second year – $n=100$ (22.4%), the third year – $n=76$ (17%), the fourth year – $n=45$ (10.1%), the fifth year – $n=27$ (6.3%), the master's students – $m=41$ (9.2%).

The statistical analysis of the received data was conducted with the program Microsoft Office Excel.

The type of selection is chaotic. The range of selection includes the registered users showing interest to the given Internet-survey. The mechanism of respondents' selection is self-selection.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The question “In your opinion, is the knowledge gained in university sufficient for your future professional activity?” was responded as follows (table 1).

As the results showed, 32.7% of respondents (146 people) characterize the amount of knowledge gained in university mostly insufficient, but 27.1% (121 people) think that this knowledge is mostly sufficient. Only 3.6% of respondents (16 people) gain more knowledge than necessary. The data is probably connected with the psychological and social characteristics of modern youth, their level of motivation to study and the correctness of their future profession choice as well as with the content of classes in university and their teachers' personalities.

The question “What are the basic motives of learning which may help you be involved in the process of longlife learning?” was responded as follows (table 2).

Having analyzed the responses for this question we may draw the conclusion that the basic motives helping to involve the Russian students in the process of longlife learning are the improvement of knowledge and skills in their professional activity – 34.8% ($n=155$), personal interest and development – 22.2% ($n=99$). So, the students consider the longlife learning not only as a temporal

opportunity to gain new knowledge or skill, but as an opportunity for professional and self- development.

The question “What are the possible reasons to be involved in the process of longlife learning?” was responded as follows (table 3).

The responses to the question prove the conclusion drawn before. The respondents consider that the current reasons for longlife learning are the desire to self-develop and develop various abilities – 47.1% (210 people) and the demand to improve the professional skills – 20% (89 people).

The question “What are the possible reasons not to be involved in the LLL process?” has the following results (table 4).

The basic reasons for not being involved in the longlife learning are the high cost of learning – 25.8% ($n=115$) and difficulties to find the time for studies – 31.4% ($n=140$). We may draw the conclusion that the given kind of learning is good for graduates with substantial financial foundation and clear motivation for further study. This is proved with the previously received responses about the development and improvement of professional skills.

The question “What directions of longlife learning are you interested in?” was responded as follows (table 5).

The respondents chose the most “popular” directions of longlife learning: English – 17.9% ($n=80$), special training of the major qualification – 14.6% ($n=65$), personal growth and development of self-management skills (time-management, activity planning etc) – 16.8% ($n=75$). It is connected with the fact that in present conditions these directions are the most important for the dynamic society and coincide with the psychological peculiarities of the modern young generation.

The question “What conditions are necessary to realize the demands of students for the longlife learning?” was responded as follows (table 6).

The conditions necessary for realization of the students' demands for longlife learning are the reasonable cost of learning – 29.8% ($n=133$) and study for free – 23.5% ($n=105$) which proves the idea that such a kind of learning is available for graduates.

The question “What informational sources do you prefer to organize the longlife learning?” was responded as follows (table 7).

The respondents who chose the active informational resources were offered to range their preferences in these resources appliance from 1 to 5. The results of the range are shown in table 8.

The most popular active informational sources are the workshops, mass open learningal resources and online courses. The least popular resources are offline courses.

The respondents who chose the passive informational sources were offered to range their preferences in these resources appliance from 1 to 5. The results of the range are shown in table 9.

The most popular passive informational sources are thematic channels, YouTube, books and articles. The least popular resources are video lectures and subscription to thematic bloggers. The question “What is prior for you in the process of longlife learning?” was responded as follows (table 10).

So, it is important for students to gain certain skills in the process of LLL, not some formal documents of learning.

Thus, we may draw the conclusion that the modern students want and are ready for longlife learning to improve their professional skills but they cannot do that because this kind of learning is not available due to the financial difficulties and the lack of time.

TABLE I. SUFFICIENCY OF KNOWLEDGE GAINED IN UNIVERSITY

	n=446	%
More than necessary	n=16	3.6
Sufficient enough	n=112	25.1
Mostly sufficient	n=121	27.1
Mostly insufficient	n=146	32.7
Insufficient at all	n=38	8.5
No answer	n=13	2.9

TABLE II. MOTIVES FOR LEARNING

	n=446	%
Improvement of knowledge and skills in the professional area	n=155	34.8
Personal interest and development	n=99	22.2
My work demands regular training	n=47	10.5
Hobby, interests	n=9	2.0
To gain knowledge and skills necessary in every day life (for example, driving, foreign languages, computer skills, parental courses etc)	n=51	11.4
To gain more money	n=17	3.8
To have an interesting spare time	n=5	1.1
To gain the career promotion and authority	n=9	2.0
To gain the career promotion and authority	n=8	1.8
To gain the information to solve the common problems, tasks in every day life (for example, to remodel the apartment, to repair the household equipment, to set the software etc)	n=2	0.6
To find a job	n=30	6.7
To gain or change a profession, qualification	n=14	3.1

TABLE III. REASONS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE LLL PROCESS

	n=446	%
Need to improve the professional skills	n=89	20
Desire to develop abilities or self-develop	n=210	47.1
Desire to broaden the outlook	n=48	10.8
Intention to improve the level of competitiveness	n=47	10.5
Dissatisfaction with the content of the learning program in university	n=18	10.5
Desire to fain an extra diploma (certificate etc)	n=22	4.9
Demands of the potential employer	n=12	2.7

TABLE IV. REASONS NOT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE LLL PROCESS

	n=446	%
I do not need it for self-development	n=32	7.2
It is rather expensive, I cannot afford it	n=115	25.8
The lack of state support	n=46	10.3
It is hard to find the time for study	n=140	31.4
I could not find what I want, what is necessary	n=64	14.3
Nowhere to study, nothing is available	n=20	4.5
The lack of time due to mu family	n=22	4.9
Other	n=7	1.6

TABLE V. THE LLL DIRECTIONS

	n=446	%
English	n=80	17.9%
Foreign languages, except for English	n=39	8.7%
Special training of the main qualification	n=65	14.6%
Speech skills	n=28	6.3 %
Personal growth and development of skills of self-management and organization (time-management, planning of activities etc.)	n=75	16.8%
Business	n=40	9%
Project management	n=3	0.7%
IT-technologies	n=23	5.2%
Human resources, administrative training	n=13	2.9%
Economics and finances	n=6	1.3%
Marketing and management	n=19	4.3%
Taxes and accounting	n=2	0.4%
Other	n=53	n=53

TABLE VI. CONDITIONS OF REALIZATION OF DEMANDS FOR LLL

	n=446	%
Reasonable cost of study	n=133	29.8
Flexible time of course classes	n=64	14.3
New programs, thematically interesting	n=39	8.7
Study for free	n=105	23.5
Project activity in the courses	n=10	2.2
Detailed information about the courses in the Internet	n=10	2.2
Pre-meetings with teachers to understand the value of courses	n=5	1.1
Individual consultations with teachers	n=7	1,6
Flexible time of university classes	n=38	8.5
Study in modules or minors (modules of learningal program which allow gaining extra competences in such a sphere of knowledge which is different from his basic learningal program) of various learningal programs	n=35	7.8

TABLE VII. INFORMATIONAL SOURCES FOR LLL

	n=446	%
Active (offline courses, online courses, seminars, workshops, open learningal sources)	n=331	74.2

	n=446	%
Passive (books, articles, video lectures, thematic communities in social networks, subscription to thematic bloggers, subscription to thematic channels YouTube)	n=115	25.8

TABLE VIII. PREFERENCES IN USAGE OF THE ACTIVE INFORMATIONAL SOURCES IN THE LLL PROCESS

	range
Offline courses	4
Online courses	3
Seminars	5
Workshops	1
MOOC	2

TABLE IX. PREFERENCES IN USAGE OF THE PASSIVE INFORMATIONAL SOURCES IN THE LLL PROCESS

	range
Books, articles	2
Video lectures	3
Thematic communities in social networks	4
Subscription to thematic bloggers	5
Subscription to thematic channels YouTube	1

TABLE X. PRIORITIES IN THE LLL PROCESS

	n	%
Certificate of course (seminar etc) accomplishment	n=79	17.7
A certain skill gained in the process of learning	n=367	82.3

LLL is considered as an opportunity for people to study, as a process of gaining and improving knowledge and skills over a lifetime.

We live in the world where people must possess skills of understanding, interpreting and processing various information. So it is important to acknowledge and value all the forms of learning. Longlife learning is of great use for both people and the country economy:

- it provides people with knowledge, skills, values, relations and understanding, which are necessary for people, citizens, workers;

- it makes communities more productive and innovative, because the workers discover new abilities and ideas. In our science-oriented economy and society job changes are regular. People who learn new skills and get trained for new tasks may better cope with the changing professional demands;

- it supports the economy. The more skills, knowledge and abilities are developed, the stronger is the economy. The strong economy means that citizens get a chance of earning more, living better and contributing to the economic system (Canlearn, 2009).

Hilderband D.S. (2008) noted 5 main advantages of LLL, that is:

- it sharpens the mind. Getting older, a human may preserve a sharp mind and good memory,

- it helps become self-assured. LLL helps to gain the assurance in ability to study and share the information with others; to gain the assurance in who we are and what we may offer;

- it improves the skills of interpersonal communication. When we study we are involved in life, we are involved in those who surround us. And when we share what we know, we help others.

- it improves the opportunities for career promotion. LLL not only improves our skills, but it gives an opportunity to learn a new skill and increase the chances for career promotion.

- it improves the ability to communicate. Learning usually uses reading, listening and writing skills which are necessary for the ability to cooperate.

These advantages are to be used to build the motivation for the LLL process.

As our research showed, one of the obstacles for participation in this process lies within the lack of financial resources and little variety of free courses. So, it is necessary to increase a number of governmental and private investments in learning. It means not only a significant increase of the state budget, but also it demands to effectively spread the existing resources and to encourage some new forms of investment. Investments in human resources have an important meaning at any stage of the economic cycle; lack of knowledge and skills may lead to unemployment.

Another reason for avoiding the LLL process, in respondents' opinion, is that learning opportunities are accessed with some difficulties. The popularization of existing resources, creation of local study centers, LLL offices may help to solve the problem. In this context we need special efforts of various groups, such as ethnic minorities, disabled people, and village citizens.

The most important task is the creation of the LLL culture in the society. It is possible by both making a prestigious LLL image and providing people with stimulus to be involved in the LLL process.

It is necessary to create the standards, leading principles and mechanisms, which help to acknowledge and reward the achievements of those people who are involved in the LLL process (Kendall, M., Samways, B., Weert, T. J. V., et al., 2004).

So, LLL is any learning activity which happens over a lifetime with the purpose to improve knowledge, skills and competences in personal, civil, social and/or labour sphere. This process uses all the forms of learning: formal learning such as a university course; nonformal learning such as professional skills; and informal learning such as the exchange of information between generations (Laal).

IV. CONCLUSION

Longlife Learning means the sequence of learning throughout our life in formal educational institutions and outside them.

The advantages of LLL are obvious. This is an opportunity to adapt to social changes. The man involved in the LLL process may keep up with the society, may be informed about the changes in technologies, news and political tendencies, finances etc. Another advantage is the career promotion. New job positions are created all the time. So vacancies can be occupied by those workers who are competent and educated in various spheres of work. Another advantage of LLL is life enrichment. People with longlife learning as their second nature may count on active and sensible life. The man involved in the LLL process uses all the opportunities to learn interesting subjects.

As the results of our research showed, the Russian modern students want and are ready for longlife learning to improve their professional skills but they cannot do that because this kind of learning is not available due to the lack of time and financial resources.

The problem of students' involvement in the LLL process is solved through the increase of governmental and private investments in learning, in human resources, in easy access to the learning opportunities and in the formation of LLL culture.

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