VOCATIONAL CORPORATE LOW-SKILLS TRAININGS MANUAL

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Methodological manual for vocational trainers, lectors and HR specialists of industrial enterprises

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The methodological manual "VOCATIONAL CORPORATE LOW-SKILLS TRAININGS MANUAL" was developed in frame of the Erasmus+ project "VET lector's competencies improvement in accordance with low-skills" Reg.No.2021-1-CZ01-KA210-VET-000034599, which is co-financed by the EU and whose beneficiary is the Czech educational agency LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. and whose partner is the Slovak educational agency Topcoach s.r.o.

The aim of this project is to increase the competences and professional qualifications of the trainers of vocational courses to teach low-skilled course participants, who work mainly in the positions of production operators. The project focuses on deepening the pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills of vocational trainers.

The project reflects the current trends in andragogy so that trainers apply specific procedures and didactic methods of adult education when teaching low-skilled participants. In the course of the project, vocational education trainers developed competences to work with low-skilled course participants comprehensively, including the level of attitudes.

The main priorities of the project are improving the quality and accessibility of vocational education, inclusion in all areas of education and increasing the attractiveness of vocational education. The project's high level of innovation lies particularly in the linking of adult vocational training, corporate training and inclusion, which has not been offered by educational organisations so far.

The methodological manual is focused on the field of andragogy. Its aim is to provide methodological support for trainers and HR specialists who organise and provide corporate training and in this position work with low-skilled participants of training activities. Low-skilled persons represent a relatively large employee group in manufacturing companies and as participants of training they are specific in many ways. The information and recommendations provided in the methodological manual are based on both professional literature and the years of experience of the training team.

Both the beneficiary company LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. and the project partner Topcoach s.r.o. have been active in the field of further vocational training for a long time. By involving both companies in this unique project, we aim to support the target group of low-skilled participants of vocational training courses at the workplaces of companies and motivate them to participate in lifelong learning leading to enhancing or increasing their qualifications in accordance with their job description.

The support of trainers of vocational courses of corporate training in increasing their professional skills in andragogy aimed at low-skilled course participants, who, in view of the socio-economic changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are becoming a significant target group of implemented corporate courses, thus leads to an improvement in the quality of trainers' work with this target group, and to an increase in the attractiveness of vocational training courses for low-skilled participants.

We believe that thanks to this methodological guide, the preparation of courses for low-skilled participants will become easier for vocational trainers and their courses will be adapted to the target group of low-skilled workers both in terms of content and the use of specific andragogical practices. For low-skilled participants in vocational courses, this will make the courses more comprehensible, attractive and motivating for lifelong learning. Many of the low-skilled participants in vocational courses are individuals with special learning needs, which have not been sufficiently taken into consideration in lifelong vocational training. Within the methodological guide for further education trainers, space is also devoted to the inclusion of this group of adult participants in vocational courses.

We believe that our project will promote inclusion among the target group of low-skilled persons, which will motivate them to further professional lifelong learning, as any change for the better is always the result of unlocking human potential.

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Beneficiary of the project

Beneficiary of the Erasmus+ project " VET lector's competencies improvement in accordance with low-skills " Reg. No. 2021-1-CZ01-KA210-VET-000034599 is the Czech educational agency LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. The main activity of the company is the preparation and implementation of vocational training courses for adults at the workplaces of companies. These courses are tailor-made according to the production programs and are designed for professionals in operation (e.g. Plastics and Injection Moulding, Reading Technical Documentation, Programming and CNC machine operation), as well as for technical and managerial staff involved in the management of production processes (Quality Control, Production Control, Logistics). Courses also include soft-skills courses for team leadership and management (Effective Communication, Teamwork, Master First Line Manager) and comprehensive training programs for production operators (Technical Aspects of Production). The company focuses on training programmes for company employees, which are aimed at increasing the professional qualifications of employees. The target groups are both production specialists (setters, technologists, CNC programmers, machinists) and THP employees (production managers, HR managers, logisticians and quality department employees). We also provide individual coaching for TOP managers of companies. Last but not least, the target group of company training courses are also low-skilled persons (production operators, front-line workers, etc.). The vocational courses are attended by employees of companies aged 18-65. The training courses are often paid for by EU subsidy programmes and projects, and therefore LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. has experience in implementing project-based training activities.

Project partner

Partner of the Erasmus+ project "Development of competences of vocational education trainers for teaching low-skills", Reg. No. 2021-1-CZ01-KA210-VET-000034599, Topcoach s.r.o. is an innovative Slovak educational organisation active in adult and youth education. It focuses on the implementation of educational courses, workshops and individual coaching for individuals (B2C segment) and companies (B2B segment). It has extensive experience in preparing educational courses, workshops and trainings for adults, students and youth, as well as in the field of self-development of people. One of its most important projects is the creation of the positivnamysel.sk portal, which helps people to connect with self-development experts across Slovakia. "Positive discussions" have given rise to the creation of the topcoach.sk project. Through these discussions, the company has also become involved in the field of marketing communication and event management. The main goal of the topcoach.sk project is to select and offer the best experts in the field of self-development through a wide range of workshops and trainings of the highest quality for both individuals and companies. Topcoach s.r.o. has created its own products, namely LeTalk interactive lectures and an academy for future leaders called New Leaders Academy. In cooperation with the Tomáš Bata Foundation from Zlín, a concept of unique Bata KNOW-HOW lectures was created. Personal growth and self-development are the lifestyle and the main motto of Topchoach s.r.o., which also has extensive experience in projects implemented in the Erasmus+ programme, not only as a partner but also as a project beneficiary.

topcoach
unlock your potential

1 Adult education

Adult education includes all learning activities leading to a specific level of education. It is a process of purposeful and systematic acquisition of and consolidation of the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values and social and behavioural forms of persons who have completed their schooling and vocational training and have entered the labour market.

In these times of increasing demands not only on jobseekers but also on employees, various forms of additional training are becoming increasingly important. In adult education, full-time on-the-job training, retraining, distance learning and correspondence learning are the most common forms of training.

However, adult education differs in many ways from the education or upbringing of children and youth. This is due to age, ability to concentrate, limited time, prior experience and ingrained learning habits. The time lag between the last time the learner sat in a school or university classroom and the amount of prior education attained also plays a role. These are the circumstances that are the focus of the field of andragogy, which applies specific methods of education, training, management and care for adults in order to prepare them for a full social and working life and to contribute to their personal development.

1.2 Forms of adult education

Formal adult education is provided in all types of educational institutions (state and non-state secondary, higher and higher education institutions, private educational institutions). It usually leads to validation and the award of a certificate or certificate of completion of an educational or retraining course. It is a so-called second chance for those who, for whatever reason, have not been educated in schools before or need to increase or deepen their qualifications in line with their job performance.

Non-formal adult education aims at the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences that can improve a person's employability. It is provided by employers, private training institutions, non-governmental non-profit organisations and educational establishments. It is both compulsory and optional qualification and retraining courses. This type of training does not lead to further education.

Adult informal learning results from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of learning objectives, duration and support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's point of view.

1.3 Specific features of adult education

The part of pedagogy called andragogy deals with teaching methods for adults. Teaching methods for adults are, of course, based on methods for children. However, adult education requires educational programmes to be as effective as possible, so its purpose should not be merely to impart information. It requires an active approach by those involved and is based on the specificities outlined below:

Perception - it is more developed in an adult, due to comparison with experience and critical evaluation (applicability in practice).

Attention - an adult has a higher ability to concentrate and, if properly motivated, can study even an extensive text.

Thinking – in case of an adult, its accuracy and functionality are reduced by stereotypes.

Memory - the adult loses the mechanical property of remembering, requires constant memorization, but has a better ability for logical memory and understanding the essence of the matter.

1.4 Creating an adult education programme

Therefore, according to Knowles (1984), the following principles should be taken into account when designing an adult education programme:

- Adults need to know why they need to learn.
- Adults need to learn from past experience.
- Adults approach learning as problem solving.
- Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate relevance to them.

This shows that adults want to learn things that are relevant to their needs to perform a particular activity. Usually, the most effective learning processes are those that focus directly on the content of the work.

The needs that an adult has for success in his or her learning and that should be in the creation of and implementation of educational programmes are summarised by Hartl (1999, p.164) based on andragogical theories:

- The learner should have as much choice as possible in the content and organisation of learning programmes.
- They should be able to participate in the planning and evaluation of their learning.
- He or she should be provided with a learning programme that builds on his or her experience, is adapted to the constraints of his or her age and includes elements of encouragement to help him or her reach increasingly advanced stages of personal development.
- Adult learning should be as meaningful as possible, i.e. in relation to to their prior knowledge.
- To make his learning more problem-solving than factual
- Their training programme should include a link between training and the actual implementation of the skills and activities to be learned.
- They should learn with materials and equipment that they will actually use after the training.

- Their learning should be based on subjects that are directly relevant to their work or personal life.
- In adult learning, it is desirable to draw on sources of knowledge that are connected rather than disconnected.
- The adult education programme should encourage the use of differences in learning strategies and styles already learned.
- Adult intellectual skills training should be appropriate to their socio-cultural background.

1.5 Adult learning in the workplace

Adult workplace learning takes place directly in the work process, where the worker learns knowledge and skills related to the performance of his or her job directly at the workplace of the employer. The workplace can be defined as a social and material environment where learning takes place not only through participation in training but also in social relationships, in working on tasks and in participating in the daily life of the organisation. The workplace is therefore understood as a new learning environment that provides a range of opportunities in which learning takes place through the interaction of employees, primarily in their daily work or in the context of training courses and training that the employer prescribes for its employees as part of their further training or qualification.

The most common forms of workplace training used are on-the-job training, on-the-job coaching, periodic statutory training, coaching, mentoring, assisting, task assignment, consultation, job rotation and work meetings including brainstorming. It also includes company-paid training provided by external training organisations or in-house trainers, such as qualification courses, in-house training, various training courses and seminars, etc.

The most frequently implemented courses for employees of companies are professional technical courses, including business process management courses, language courses and soft-skills courses. These courses are mainly implemented for technical and managerial staff, while low-skilled workers are mainly represented in the target group of production

operators. The data are based on the average values obtained from the analysis of the courses implemented by the training companies of both partners over the last 5 years. Given the long-term experience of both the beneficiary and the project partner, it can be assumed that the following distribution of courses can be expected for corporate courses of similar content and target groups in general.

Content Focus of the Courses

- ■ Specialized Technical Courses
- □ Process Management
- ■ Self Discovery and Development
- ■ Effective Communication
- ■ IT Skills
- ■ Technical Documentation
- ■ Management Theory
- ■ First Aid Courses
- ■ Language Skills
- ■ Life and Situational Topics
- ■ Methodology of the Education
- ■ Others

Target Groups of the Courses

- ■ TOP Management
- ■ Technicians
- ■ Operators
- □ Project Managers
- ■ HR Managers and Finance Managers
- ■ Public
- ■ Teachers and Lectors
- □ Disadvantaged Groups
- ■ Unemployees
- □ Others

1.6 Competence of the vocational trainer in a company

The activity of the trainer consists in teaching and transferring to the participants expert knowledge and skills according to the deal concluded. Both the contracting authority and the trainee expect the trainer to be sufficiently competent, i.e. to have sufficient knowledge and experience in the field, that he/she can organise the course well and make functional use of the full range of didactic and andragogical methods, that he/she can communicate optimally with the audience, that he/she can handle problematic participants and that he/she leaves an overall positive impression on the audience.

It means that the scope of competencies that a vocational trainer must possess is broad.

Langer (2016) divides the basic competences of a trainer into three groups: professional competences, methodological competences and personal competences.

- The professional competences are related to the field that the trainer teaches and are acquired by the trainer through education of various kinds and through practice in the performance of the activity. The proportion of both these sources is related to the nature of the discipline.
- Methodological competences are related to the teaching process, they refer to knowledge of didactic principles and a wide range of forms and methods of teaching, the ability to functionally use various tools and didactic techniques, as well as communication and presentation skills and knowledge of ways of motivating participants.
- Personal competences include empathy, patience, creativity, flexibility of thinking, sense of humour, interest in participants and other personality traits.

2 Corporate training of low-skilled participants

Adult further vocational education is very closely linked to, builds on and complements the initial education sector, which for individuals with basic education disadvantages in vocational courses. For these reasons, the methodological guide focuses on the development of competences of vocational trainers for working with low-skilled participants and their inclusion.

The implementation of vocational training courses at company workplaces is an important part of adult vocational training. Recently, more and more courses for production operators have been implemented. These jobs often employ people with primary or lower secondary education, so-called low-skilled workers. New and existing employees are mainly trained in vocational technical courses according to the companies' production programmes. Industrial companies are also interested in the vocational training of low-skilled employees with a view to quality assurance and the digitalisation of production.

2.1 Vocational trainers' experience with low-skilled participants

As two educational organizations which have been active in professional corporate training and in the field of self-development of people for a long time, we encounter the fact that the trainers of corporate courses are very knowledgeable from a professional point of view, but much less so in the field of pedagogical-psychological and andragogy. Most of them have a university degree or a secondary school diploma themselves and are specialists in their field, but they are more difficult to adapt to the learning needs of low-skilled participants, namely those with low levels of educational attainment.

An online workshop with corporate training trainers revealed that the trainers themselves feel insecure when training this group, that they realise that the courses bring less effect to this group than they could, that they have difficulties motivating these participants to pay attention and learn and to make the courses attractive and

interactive enough for them. For low-skilled participants, clarity, practicality of the course and course content emerged as critical points. In an online workshop, the trainers themselves characterized the most common risks and pitfalls of training low-skilled participants as follows:

- Vocational courses are often incomprehensible and "hard" for low-skilled workers

- It is necessary to narrow down the content, but it "loses" on expertise

- Training materials are almost always too extensive for low-skilled workers

- Preparing professional presentations thus seems "unnecessary"

- Always include more graphics than text and formulas

- Frontal teaching fails here as "too academic"

- Motivating participants to learn is much more challenging

- Without interactivity and practicality, the course must be "based on life"

- Attention is lost more quickly, thus reducing the effectiveness of education

- A vocational course should never be boring, otherwise low-skilled workers don't appreciate it

- It is necessary to include modern teaching methods, humour and various games

- Operators can't sit still for long and are "uncomfortable sitting down"

- You need to take more frequent breaks

For the target group of low-skilled workers, vocational courses are often incomprehensible and overly technical. Therefore, there is a need to develop the competences of vocational trainers to work with low-skilled course participants in order to ensure greater effectiveness and attractiveness of vocational corporate training for this target group.

Therefore, when training these people, it is necessary to take into account their level of learning ability and their low motivation to learn, both in terms of modifying the content of the professional course and the educational methods used. If the trainer adapts his/her course to low-skilled participants, he/she can effectively transfer his/her expertise to them and can motivate them to further lifelong learning and education.

2.2 Low-skilled jobs in an enterprise

Low-skilled course participants within the company hierarchy most often work as production operators, but sometimes also as maintenance workers, foremen and team leaders etc. Usually, they have only completed primary education or have an apprenticeship certificate in a non-job-related field. Nevertheless, they are a significant group of people undergoing company training, either as part of their induction into the workforce or as part of statutory training, but also as part of vocational courses to improve their qualifications.

Basically, these are low-skilled individuals with a more or less negative attitude towards further education and lifelong learning, mostly with a negative school experience and low levels of self-confidence and belief in their own development.

In the workplaces of low-skilled enterprises, the most common positions are:

- Production operators - workers

- Warehousemen, Forklift operators

- Front Workers, Teamleaders, Shift Leaders, Working Group Leaders

In terms of education, the employees with the following levels of education are the most common:

- Primary school - completed and incomplete primary education

- Secondary education with a diploma/graduation usually not related to the professional focus of the position held (e.g. hairdresser, waiter)

2.3 Frequency of low-skilled participants in vocational training courses

An analysis of the courses delivered over the last 5 years by both partner training companies clearly shows that the percentage of vocational courses delivered to low-skilled participants has increased markedly in the last year, probably in light of the socio-economic changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, the percentage of courses implemented for production operators was 1.13%, rising to 13.12% in 2019 and even to 65.89% of the total number of courses implemented by the two partner training organizations at company workplaces in 2020.

Given that the highest proportion of low-skilled employees (employees with basic education) is employed in production operator positions, it is necessary to respond to this situation, as the trend of increasing the proportion of low-skilled students attending vocational courses that lead to an increase in their professional qualifications is more than evident.

LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. focuses mainly on the implementation of vocational training courses at the workplaces of industrial companies, which are tailor-made in accordance with the requirements of employers. For these courses, the presence of low-skilled participants was recorded in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic in one third of all training activities implemented, which basically confirmed the above assumptions that low-skilled participants are encountered in corporate training in courses other than those designed only for production operators and warehouse workers.

According to a more detailed specification, it was found that many of them were categorised as "technicians and technologists", as they had to take highly specialised technical courses for which they had no background knowledge in order to perform their jobs. At the same time, the target group "managers" also includes first-line managers (e.g. shift supervisor, foreman, etc.) who was promoted to this position based on their excellent performance of the work activity, not because of the required education. As part of their corporate education, these individuals then take courses primarily focused on corporate process management, soft-skills and leadership.

In the case of vocational training courses for production operators implemented by LASERneedle CZ s.r.o., the share of low-skilled workers in vocational training courses increased to 100% during the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the current economic and social situation, where employees are moving within companies between different job positions and at the same time there is a faster digitalization of company processes, there is a need to educate low-skilled workers especially in vocational and IT training courses. Given the project beneficiary's long-term experience with corporate training, we expect a significant increase in low-skilled participants in vocational training courses in general.

**Low-skills in VET Courses
2019**

23%

77%

■ YES
■ NO

**Low-skills in VET Courses
2021**

AFTER COVID-19

42%

58%

■ YES
■ NO
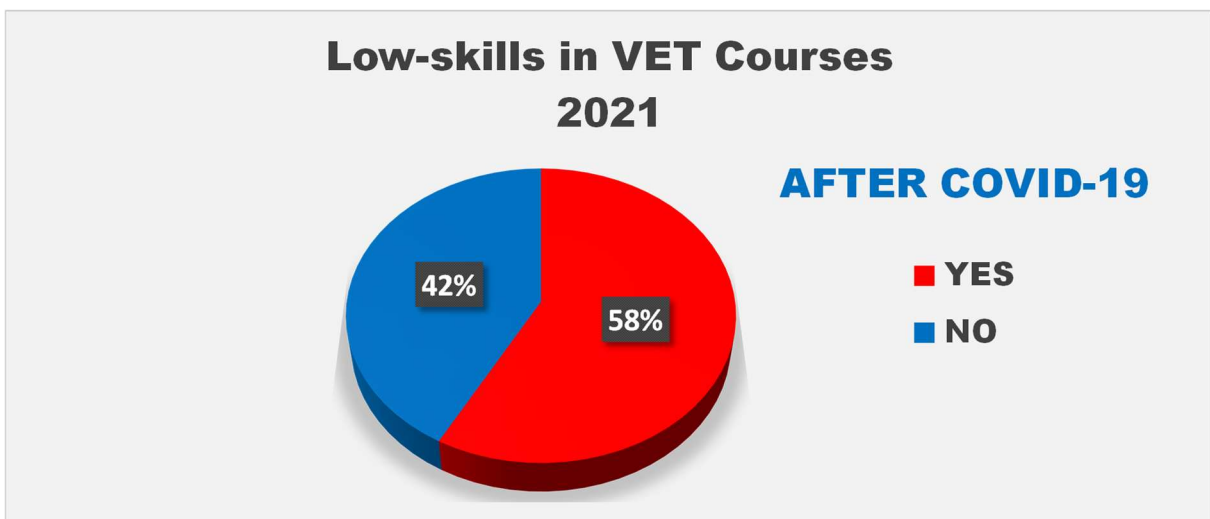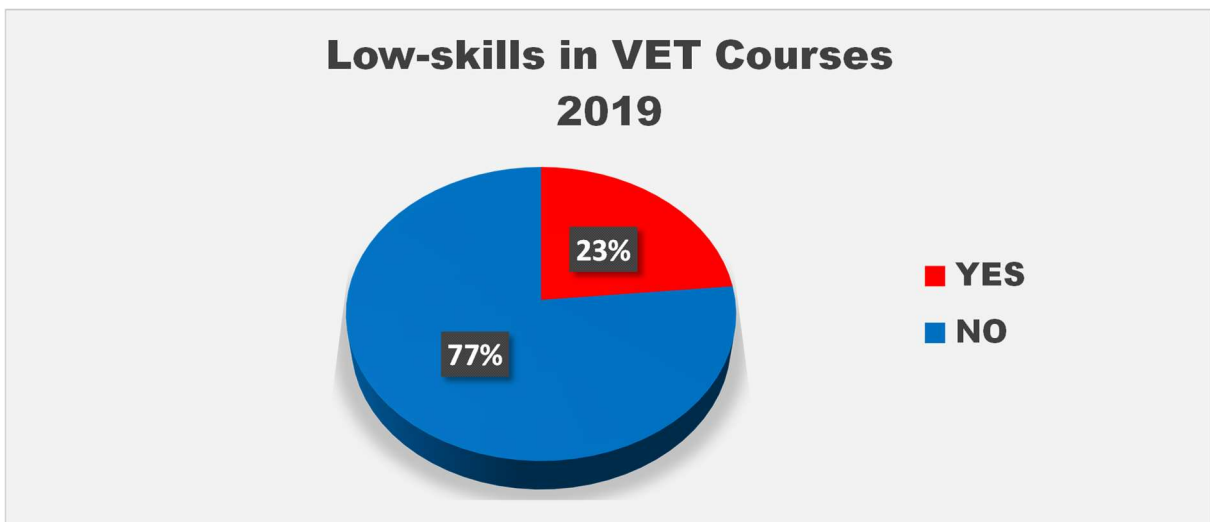
The project partner, Slovak company Topcoach s.r.o., has the largest share of courses for the general public, as well as activities aimed at teachers and educators, with only one course in the last 5 years directly aimed at low-skilled participants. Although only one course has been designed directly for low-skilled participants, indirectly these participants have been counted in other target groups. In practice, they are excluded only from the target group of teachers and educators, where qualification or competence requirements for the role are defined.

Almost 15% of all training activities implemented by Topcouch s.r.o. had real low-skilled participants, who were recruited from among production workers, unemployed persons and individuals from disadvantaged groups. Only the target group of one course was directly identified as low-skilled workers. In terms of educational content, these were classic management, personal development and soft-skills and ICT skills, designed mainly as skills training. However, the potential presence of low-skilled participants was much higher, as 54% of the implemented courses were offered to the general public, without defined entry requirements for admission to the course. On a theoretical level, low-skilled workers were able to enrol in all these courses. In other words, the proportion of courses with low-skilled participants may be considerably higher.

The trainer does not always know in advance about the presence of low-skilled participants in a training course and only estimates the number of low-skilled participants in the course by their speeches during the initial discussion or during the training. Therefore, these are participants who have drawn the trainer's attention in this direction during the pedagogical interaction. For this reason, we assume a slightly higher real proportion. No records indicating the participant's educational background are made before the implementation of training courses; it is partly possible to find out about the level of input knowledge of the participants of vocational courses when ordering a course from the company's personnel. Thus, the proportion of low-skilled participants in the course is not decisive in the preparation of vocational training courses, but the main aspect for the modification of vocational courses for low-skilled participants, both in terms of content and in terms of the andragogical methods used, is already the assumption of the presence of low-skilled participants in the training course.

3 Developmental, physiological and psychological specificities of low-skilled learners

Developmental, physiological and psychological factors form the so-called internal learning conditions. The success of learning depends mainly on motivation, the level of learning ability and the physiological state of the organism. In vocational training for adults, we must generally take into account the age characteristics and specificities of the target group.

3. 1 Age aspect

The physiological state of a person has a significant impact on the course and learning performance. Deficits in this area are determined by innate predispositions, a time-limited disorder or disease, or the natural aging process. An individual becomes aware of them most often before the age of forty. This awareness also has psychological implications, particularly in the areas of motivation to learn and satisfaction with learning outcomes. The main physiological changes that affect performance occur in the neural and muscular systems.

Four factors are important for physical performance:

- physical constitution,
- proper nutrition and lifestyle,
- constant and adequate training and
- rest proportional to the load.

Most research shows that movement and reaction speeds peak around the age of 20, then remain at that level until the age of 50, before beginning a gradual decline (Kulishchak, 2003). However, there are large individual differences. Up to a quarter of adults over the age of fifty retain psychomotor activity at the level of young adults.

The question remains, however, how low-skilled trainees are trained, most of whom hold manual and often physically demanding positions. Whether it is this movement

that leads to a healthy increase in fitness, or to what extent these individuals are willing to and often able to engage in physical activity after a day's exertion.

The most significant physiological changes are reflected in the learning rate. The relationship between age and certain abilities was defined by Hartl (1999, p.111). No decline or with the possibility of further increase with advancing age: memory for simple materials, working memory, memory for tones, vocabulary, general awareness. With some decline: motor speed, sensorimotor coordination, traditional school learning, analogical reasoning. With the most significant decline: facility with new materials, learning symbols, imbibing numbers and nonsense syllables.

In the intellectual domain, adult performance is influenced by other factors rather than physiological changes. Firstly, schooling, secondly, the type of occupation. Persons with less education show a greater decline in intellectual performance during ageing than those with more schooling. Occupations requiring constant mental training promote the development of mental abilities and vice versa.

3. 2 Ability to learn

Also, learning can be seen as a skill that can be developed but can also decline. The success of learning in adult life depends on the length of the so-called initial learning, its *focus* and quality, and the length of the break before further learning begins. It follows that every adult is capable of learning to the extent that he/she or she has been exposed to learning throughout the previous learning period. Appropriate motivation and emotional support from the environment are prerequisites for success.

While associative stimulus-response learning is predominant in children, in adults it is strongly cognitive learning based on thinking and problem solving.

3. 3 Cognitive processes of low-skilled participants

Perception

All learning begins with the perception of a stimulus. In fact, more than 85 percent of learning takes place through vision (Hartl, 1999, p.112). The most significant change in vision occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. Contrast (distinguishing the learning material from its surroundings) also has a significant effect on reading speed and ease. The perception of colour contributes to the richness of visual experience and thus increases the amount of information available. Already after the age of thirty, a greater amount of blue light is needed to perceive the blue colour. The decline in the ability to distinguish colours diminishes towards the red extreme of the spectrum, where there is virtually no loss with age.

In auditory perception we also register certain age-related deficits. A decline in hearing pure tones occurs every decade of a person's life. Men show a slightly greater decline than women. Women lose the ability to hear low tones earlier, men high tones. Hearing impairment has three possible causes: decline caused by physiological changes during aging, changes caused by wear and tear on the sense organ, and decline arising from the nature of the occupation. A person's inability to hear clearly and understand speech satisfactorily can also cause emotional disturbances such as depression, anxiety or frustration. All of these problems can block the learning process. The other senses are only marginally involved in adult learning.

Memory

Physiological age-related changes in the adult body can also have a negative effect on memory. However, little initial learning is a much stronger cause of poor memory than physiological influences. The greatest decline in memory is seen in those types and kinds of memory that are not used by the individual throughout life. More memory problems occur with visual intake than with auditory intake. Retention and recall of learned material is influenced by its nature and the means by which it was acquired.

Meaningful material is always retained longer than material that is not. The length of retention is further enhanced by the comprehension of the learning material.

Attention

The attention span of an adult is sooner exhausted and is not as flexible as that of children and adolescents. For example, an adult is not able to follow a demonstration that is carried out too quickly. Also, the ability to maintain focused attention for long periods of time tends to decline.

Thinking

The process of generalization is the most important thought operation and it's something that you practice throughout your life. It is naturally reflected in his ability or art to solve problems. The above analysis suggests that the process of generalization remains, in a healthy individual, without loss until the highest age.

3. 4 Key competences of low-skilled participants

Although physiological factors influence all types of performance, psychomotor skills and verbal communication are most important for learning outcomes.

Any psychomotor skill acquired in youth tends to decline. The rate of skill performance is obviously related to changes in reaction time and the time required to perform the actual action. It is the speed of psychomotor skills that is the area in which the greatest differences between young people and older adults are evident.

The ability to communicate through speech or writing and to receive communication through reading or listening are essential functions of social inclusion. A number of studies have reported that the size of the vocabulary and stored information increases with age, but physiological changes limit an adult's ability to make full use of all that he/she or she knows. In adulthood, the organisation of and the use of accumulated information. Increasingly, adults classify and generalise an increasing amount of information into broader logical units. This allows them to be organised more conveniently. Differences in verbal fluency can cause problems, particularly where

participants of different ages have been enrolled in the same course. However, the experience of educators suggests a lower level of expressive ability in low-skilled learners.

3.5 Activation and motivation to learn

In adult learning, it has been found many times that too high a level of activation can reduce performance, more so in older than in younger adults. In adult learning, this is often related to its pace. Many authors state that a fast pace of work results in increased anxiety and that a good level of performance depends on an optimal level of activation. High levels of anxiety accompany most adult learning. Its source lies in the fear of failure and the loss of self-confidence or social prestige. It occurs not only in formal but also in informal learning situations.

In practice, adult educators encounter three types of situations:

- They have a person in the course who is deeply dissatisfied with himself and feels a discrepancy between the education he/she has attained and the education he/she desires. He/she is overcome by such severe anxiety and low self-confidence that he/she is very reluctant to approach further learning. This category includes a relatively large number of low-skilled course participants.
- They have a person in the course who is completely satisfied with himself/herself and his/her level of education. Therefore, he/she often fails to generate a sufficient level of activation for further learning. Also, we can estimate that it is in this category that low-skilled workers are present in.
- The third category is the adult experiencing a healthy dissatisfaction with themselves and a reasonable mismatch between their education and their need to learn. he/she or she is best placed to succeed in further learning. In low-skilled workers, such individuals are rather rare, and their motivation to learn usually needs to be stimulated externally.

If the desire to achieve a goal comes from the individual's own motivation, we speak of intrinsic motivation. It is considered most valuable for learning. Often, however, trainers encounter a lack of interest in the topic among low-skill participants.

Extrinsic motivation usually stems from the needs of a company or organisation that needs its employees to upgrade their qualifications or retrain. Michaels (1974) categorized motivation to learn in adults according to personal gains.

- The immediate gain includes the awakening of interest, which is usually due to the influence of the tutor or to a past experience that is revived. Another immediate gain may be, for example, a positive social response in the study group. This can also eliminate fears about the difficulty of the topic.

- We could also consider the immediate possibility of using the acquired knowledge in one's employment or certification as a short-term gain.

- The long-term gains are in prestige, professional mobility and increased earnings.

Insufficiently motivated participants in training programs may tend to create a negative atmosphere in the group, be significantly passive, take a destructive approach to the mistakes of others, and develop other risky behaviours.

4 Internal corporate trainer of low-skilled workers

Vocational corporate training is specific in that it is delivered by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and educational levels. Many training activities are legally compulsory for enterprises, while others are implemented to improve the competitiveness of the enterprise. The trainers and instructors of these professional courses are recruited not only from among external highly specialised experts but also from among experienced internal employees.

Long-term experience shows that employers could carry out some recurrent employee training in-house if they had sufficiently qualified trainers. The expertise of in-house trainers is covered in line with the experience of the employee, but often lacks the prescribed level or type of training. Therefore, employers often ask about the possibility of obtaining the necessary training without having to release employees from the production process for a long period of time.

Currently, there is the option to train in-house trainers through a combined form of study while employed within the standard school system, or to obtain a professional qualification that corresponds in level to the school system. However, the current system of professional qualifications does not offer one that is applicable to the specifics of vocational corporate training. The vocational qualification 'Further education trainer' has too high a level of qualification for the needs of enterprises and the requirements do not correspond to the reality of the enterprise and are demotivating for employees. In Slovakia, the situation is similar with regard to the history of the school system.

In the case of hiring external trainers, the training provider can verify all the competences of the trainers in various ways when selecting the training provider, or it can rely on the guarantee of the training agency, which guarantees the quality of the training. The question remains, however, whether and how internal trainers are vetted and whether they also possess the necessary competences for the preparation and implementation of internal training, the quality of which the employer is subsequently responsible for.

The professional specialization of internal trainers usually corresponds to the requirements of the educational objectives and is usually evidenced by length of experience, proof of highest educational attainment, or proof of qualification. However, expertise in the field of pedagogy and andragogy is usually not addressed in any way. In addition to the reduced quality of education, this poses many procedural, economic and legal risks for enterprises. All the more so for the quality of the training provided, both in terms of professional and pedagogical andragogical aspects, the relevant employer is always liable under the provisions of Section 103(2) and (3) of the Labour Code, with all the resulting consequences.

Internal trainers train employees in various positions, for example, in the area of company processes, quality management, but also in the specialized areas of periodically recurring training of forklift operators or occupational health and safety, which also leads to significant cost savings for external educators. In addition, for example, the positions of forklift operators, who regularly undergo periodic training in both forklift operation and occupational safety, are the most low-skilled employees, for whom training needs to be adapted to their needs and learning abilities so that the training is both effective and meets all legal requirements for quality, professionalism and clarity.

Based on long-term demand from employers, training organisations are trying to address these needs. One way to address the current situation is to enable internal employees to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competences.

The methodological manual provides industrial enterprises with the opportunity to train new employees and to implement periodic statutory trainings internally, as it will enable them to educate and train employees internally using modern methods of pedagogy and andragogy and will enable internal trainers and trainers of persons working, for example, in the positions of production operators, warehouse workers or forklift operators, to prepare their trainings with greater attractiveness and in the spirit of inclusive principles. This will increase the effectiveness and clarity of training delivered by in-house trainers to low-skilled participants at company workplaces.

5 Specifics of the interaction between trainer and low-skilled course participants

When working with adult low-skilled course participants, it is important to remember that trainers do not act as traditional teachers, but rather as facilitators and sources of information. A prerequisite for successful learning is to create a friendly, creative atmosphere in the group and to accept everyone as an equal partner. The teacher must programmatically avoid any hints of arrogance or belittling of adults, to which low-skilled workers in particular tend to be highly sensitive.

In terms of social psychological approaches to personality, it is appropriate to apply Moreno's or Rogers' approach when teaching low-skilled workers.

> ## Moreno's approach to personality
>
> - TÉLÉ
> - empathy

The basis of Moreno's approach to personality is an empathic connection to the participants, which enables the creation of the so-called TÉLÉ. TÉLÉ means the creation of a mutual non-erotic love between the trainer and the participant. The advantage of this approach is that it allows for functional learning even when the participant is not yet able to understand the meaning. For more complex and more extensive learning content, especially with low-skilled workers, there may be situations where the learner temporarily does not understand why they are learning what they are learning. It is this period that Moreno's approach bridges by having the learner, based on the created TÉLÉ, attempt to and cooperate for the sake of the tutor.

If the trainer fails to create a TÉLÉ, it is appropriate to apply Rogers' approach to the personality of the other, which is based on the principles of freedom of decision and full responsibility for the decision made.

Rogers' approach to personality

- freedom of decision
- responsibility

This approach reinforces the individual responsibility of the participants and shows them the trainer's respect. While the trainer is expected to point out potential risks, he/she is not expected to interfere in the decision-making process. Example*: "If you don't want to be actively involved, not only will you not try it out, but you will get bored. But of course the decision is yours."* Conflicting participants can also be managed well based on this approach.

When training low-skilled participants, we have to take into account that participants may have a primarily negative attitude towards the trainer. Very often it is a representative of a university education that they have not attained. They may expect in advance that he/she will be a mere theoretician, that his/her experience will be alien to them, etc. Therefore, the trainer must appropriately convey the components of credibility in the interaction.

Credibility factors:

- professionalism
- empathy
- honesty
- engagement

The trainer must present himself as a professional. This means having a well-prepared lesson plan and being able to answer the participants' questions in a factual manner. But at the same time, the trainer cannot present himself as an expert in everything. That would devalue his professionalism. If a trainer receives a question outside his

field and is not quite sure of the answer, the only correct action is to admit his ignorance.

Another component of trustworthiness is expressed empathy, which is most consistent with active listening in communication.

Honesty is also important. The optimum level of honesty is achieved by answering questions directly and without detours. Participants must not have the impression that the trainer is hiding something from them. This is because they would immediately think that he/she is somehow colluding with their superiors against them. On the other hand, we don't have to tell the participants everything we know about the rest of the company. Even in this case we would be acting as a dangerous person. Participants might logically fear that we would transmit information about them in the same way.

Engagement is the final component of credibility, which indicates the level of our involvement. A trainer who shows that he/she enjoys learning, that he/she is willing to devote some of his energy to teach something, that he/she is willing to repeat everything, that he/she cares about the result, that he/she is not lazy to double check the result, is credible and has the potential to engage the participants with his enthusiasm.

Even though we manage to establish an open, friendly relationship with low-skilled participants and respectful relationship, we must account for the inherent barriers within the organization and not be drawn into criticism by superiors. This is definitely not part of the trainer's remit.

6 Preparing educational content for low-skilled participants

The content of training must meet the specific training needs of business practice and the labour market, it must reflect the life situation of the learner and be based on his/her experience and knowledge. Indeed, prior knowledge and expertise in the area to be taught clearly influences the breadth and depth of the course level, content and pace of lectures. If the level of the course is too low and the pace of the lectures too slow or vice versa, participants would be frustrated. At the same time, participants' motivation, which affects the effectiveness of learning, depends mainly on the value they place on the objectives in relation to their current job and future career and on the difficulty of the tasks and the objectives set. As mentioned above in vocational corporate training, trainers quite often work with low-skilled course participants who have only completed basic education. For these persons, the continuity of knowledge and skills of secondary or higher level education cannot be counted on in the preparation of the training course. That's why, it is also necessary to consider the need to modify the educational content itself in addition to adjusting didactic methods and organisational forms of teaching. The requirements of the professional role for which the trainee is being prepared through training do not make it very easy to reduce the educational content. However, it is necessary to ensure continuity with existing knowledge and skills. The methodology aimed at ensuring this continuum includes a schematic and a descriptive part. The flow chart shows the sequence of steps in the modification of the learning content, including the basic input variables. The verbal description includes a rationale.

6. 1 Flowchart of the educational content modification process

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌───────────────────────┐
            │         FORM          │
            │ EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES │
            └───────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌───────────────────────┐
            │         DRAFT         │
            │  EDUCATIONAL CONTENT   │
            └───────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌───────────────────────┐
            │      BREAK DOWN        │
            │  EDUCATIONAL CONTENT   │
            │    INTO SUB-TOPICS     │
            └───────────────────────┘
                        │
            ┌───────────────────────┐
            │ DEFINE THE REQUIREMENTS │
            │   ON INPUT KNOWLEDGE   │
            │ AND SKILLS OF THE PARTICIPANTS │
            └───────────────────────┘
                        │
                      ╱   ╲
          NO        ╱       ╲
    ◄─────────────  PRESENCE OF
                   LOW-SKILLED PARTICIPANTS
                      ╲       ╱
                        ╲   ╱
                        YES │
            ┌───────────────────────┐
            │        CHECK,         │
            │ WHETHER THEY CAN MEET  │
            │   ENTRY REQUIREMENTS   │
            └───────────────────────┘
                 │            │
               ( )          ( )
```

CAN THEY REACH
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

NO

YES

INCLUDE REPETITION,
PRACTICING
IN EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

ALLOCATE SPACE FOR
INTERPRETATION

NO

IT IS NECESSARY
ADJUST EDUCATIONAL
GOAL?

YES

INFORM
CLIENT

DIDACTICAL
TRANSFORMATION
OF THE CURRICULUM

END

Procedure for verifying that participants can meet the entry requirements

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
PARTICIPANTS

STUDY THE FEP[1]

DETERMINE THE RELEVANT
EDUCATIONAL AREA
AND SUBJECTS

COMPARE THE EXPECTED
LEARNING OUTCOMES
WITH KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS
AND SKILLS

END
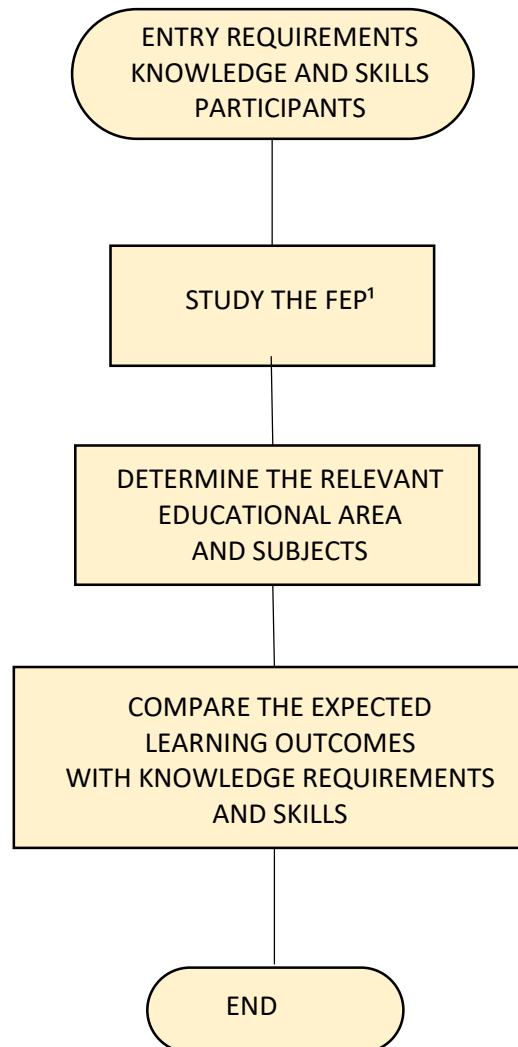
1 Framework Educational Programme of the Czech Republic for Primary Education, available online from: https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/

State educational program for the first and second grade of primary school:
https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/svp-prvy-stupen-zs/

State educational programme for the second stage of primary school

https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/svp-druhy-stupen-zs/

6.2 Description of the modification of the educational content

1. The preparation of the content of training courses usually begins with the contact of the training organiser, or directly the trainer, with the representatives of the sponsor. In the context of vocational training in industrial enterprises, this may be an HR department employee, a business process manager or the head of a specific work unit. The aim of this meeting is to define and mutually clarify the training needs of the participants from the perspective of business practice.

2. On the basis of these requirements, the trainer formulates the learning objectives he/she wants to achieve for the participants during the learning activity. It is important that the formulation of learning objectives is sufficiently specific, measurable and also realistic.

3. Based on the set objectives, the trainer proposes a basic picture of the educational content, several key topics.

4. The trainer then elaborates these topics into specific sub-contents, i.e. related topics and subtopics and determines their teaching sequence.

5. For each of these sub-topics and contents, the trainer must think about what knowledge, skills and attitudes of the participants he/she intends to build on, what assumed knowledge, skills, attitudes will be the basis for teaching the topic.

6. If low-skilled participants are present on the course, the trainer must check whether they can achieve the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes. If low-skilled participants are not present, the trainer continues with point 13.

7. The procedure for verifying input requirements is described in clauses 7.1 to 7.3.

   7.1 The trainer must first study the Framework Curriculum for Primary Education, which is available in Czech at
   https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/
   and in Slovak at:
   https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/svp-prvy-stupen-zs/
   https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/svp-druhy-stupen-zs/

7.2 In the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education, the trainer determines the educational area and subjects covered by the content of the course.

7.3 The trainer then compares the expected outcomes for each subject with the defined requirements for the participants' input knowledge, skills and attitudes.

8. If it has been determined that low-skilled participants can achieve the entry requirements, the trainer proceeds with the repetition phase. Otherwise, the trainer continues with step 10.

9. The phase of repeating and practicing the initial knowledge and skills is included because many years may have passed since the participant's formal education and the knowledge needs to be refreshed. This phase is followed by point 13.

10. If the procedure described in 7.1 - 7.3 shows that the low-skilled participant cannot achieve the required knowledge, skills and/or attitudes, the trainer must allocate sufficient space for interpretation in the training content.

11. There may also be a situation that the estimated input knowledge and skill deficiencies of low-skilled participants are of such a nature that it is not realistic to achieve the originally set learning objectives within the framework of the planned learning activity. If the tactical situation has not occurred, the trainer v with point 13.

12. The trainer should inform the sponsor of the modification of the learning objectives.

13. The trainer approaches the didactic transformation of the educational content.

7 Adult learning methods

7.1 Didactic forms

The literature on educational methods operates with two basic concepts: organizational (didactic) **form** and didactic **method**. The Pedagogical Dictionary (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš, 1995, p. 69) defines forms of teaching as: *"Means, ways of organizing teaching related to the arrangement of the environment, ways of organizing the activities of the teacher and learners."* Mužík (2005) divides teaching according to the form into direct, combined teaching, correspondence learning, field education and self-learning. With Eger (2004) we encounter only a simplified basic division of organisational forms of teaching into direct (full-time), combined and remote forms.

Direct instruction is characterized by direct, personal contact between the trainer and the participant and for some topics is irreplaceable. **Combined learning** has been developed in an effort to increase the share of individual study in the total volume of education and its important part is specially prepared study texts for individual study. **Distance learning** is characterised by the fact that the participant is separated from his or her trainer by geographical distance. It is often implemented through online applications. **Field education** is a very specific form of education. It essentially includes all the elements of the previous didactic forms, i.e. direct teaching, combined and correspondence education, but in specific conditions - in the field. It is often used by enterprises to gain new work experience and to strengthen team spirit in the workplace.

In **self-education, the** individual transforms himself by becoming an active subject of education and learning (Hartl, 1999). As a stand-alone form, it almost always takes place on the basis of some kind of learning support or learning aid, e.g. e-learning, which enables systematic verification of learning outcomes.

7.2 Didactic methods

The didactic method consists in the creation of a set of procedures by which the trainer transmits knowledge and forms the skills, possibly habits of the participants, aimed at achieving the goal of teaching (Kolář, Sýkora, 1986). Similarly, the didactic methods can include processes by means of which the participant acquires knowledge, skills or habits (Mužík, 2005). There is considerable inconsistency in the classification of didactic methods. The number of methods is constantly increasing and they are becoming an important know-how, especially in the field of adult education. There is no one right or universal method, each has its advantages and disadvantages.

According to Mužík (2005), didactic methods can be divided into theoretical, theoretical-practical and practical methods. **Theoretical methods** are the most suitable for transmitting theoretical knowledge, for clarifying concepts, principles, theories. They consist mainly in the verbal speech of the trainer, basically in his monologue. This category includes the classical lecture, the lecture with discussion, the exercise and the seminar. **Theoretical-practical methods not** only provide knowledge but also focus on acquiring the prerequisites for successful action in practice, e.g. discussion methods, problem-based methods, project-based learning, diagnostic and classification methods, etc. **Practical methods take** place directly in practice - in companies or in special training centres. These are instruction, coaching, mentoring, counselling, job rotation, internship and field trips.

According to the direction of the resources and the degree of assistance that the trainer exerts towards the participant's learning, Mužík (2005) distinguishes between transfer methods and facilitation methods. **Transfer methods** are those methods in which the trainer transfers knowledge, skills and habits to the participant, so to speak, "from the above". On the other hand, **facilitation methods** are methods where the trainer focuses on supporting the learning activities and the whole learning process of the participant, especially the facilitation and guidance process, "from the bottom". Mužík lists lecture, dialogic methods, problem-solving methods, consultation and field trips as

examples of transfer methods, and considers instruction, coaching, workshop, study-solving activity, training company, e-learning, etc. as facilitation methods.

Another grading criterion is the _relationship of the methods to addressing the individual learning needs of the participants_. Some methods are predominantly focused on **learning about** social and professional **problems of** the participants, e.g. lectures, discussion methods, situational methods, staging methods, etc. Other methods are more oriented towards **solving** social and professional **problems of** the participants. Examples include economic games, systematic observation, direct training, field trips and internships (Muzik, 2004).

The mode of interaction between the trainer and the participant divides the teaching methods into **monological, dialogical**, **problem-based**, **didactic games**, etc., and then into **frontal**, **group** or **individual work** methods. This division is presented in publications such as Maňák (1995) .

In some publications we encounter the term **activating didactic methods** and this term refers to didactic methods that stimulate and maintain the activity of participants, such as brainstorming, staging methods, situational or case studies, etc. In principle, however, any didactic method, if used correctly and at the appropriate time, can contribute to activating the learning activities of the participants and their results.

The trainer is primarily responsible for the choice and composition of didactic methods of corporate training activities, based on his/her own andragogical competences. Although the organisational or didactic form must be confronted with the possibilities of the enterprise, the the use of a particular didactic method or didactic procedure is determined by his personal preferences, experience with the method, knowledge of the specifics of the participants and, of course, the content and objective of the training activity.

8 Specifics of the didactic transformation of the curriculum for low-skilled participants

The external conditions for successful learning are created by the learning organiser, trainer or instructor through the objective, curriculum, syllabus, learning material embedded in the textbook or learning programme or by their presence. The effectiveness of the learning depends primarily on the extent to which the trainer's goal coincides with that of the participant.

Mužík (2005) identifies the guiding principles in adult learning as being demonstrative, mindfulness, activity, appropriateness, and consistency, which is doubly true for low-skilled learners.

Illustrative teaching develops low-skill learners' ability to connect prior knowledge and experience with new knowledge.

The principle of participation implies the requirement for continuous application of the knowledge communicated - the connection of theory with the practice of the participants. The relevance of the content of the teaching has a significant impact on feedback. Especially for teaching low-skilled workers, it is essential that the trainer knows their level of knowledge and experience, their working environment, conditions and tasks, functions and roles they have in the workplace, etc.

The principle of permanence expresses the requirement that participants retain the knowledge or skills they have learned sufficiently to be able to equip and apply them in practice as needed. The activity of the participants, i.e. the appropriate choice of the didactic method and the system of repetition and practice of the material, is important for the durability of the memorisation.

The principle of consistency is applied by the trainer in particular by communicating the learning objectives to the participants and structure of the material and introduces the material in a logical sequence.

8. 1 Composition of educational content

Especially with adults, the trainer should know their needs in detail, their requirements for the content of the learning, and understand the conditions and the learning process well, so that he/she or she can organize the learning into appropriate units and deliver it to the participants in the most effective way (Hartl, 1999, p.151).

In long-term full-time programmes, the question of whether to design the programme as monothematic or polytopic is often addressed. However, the monotony of the content acts as a strong negative element of motivation for learning, weakens the participant's interest in the material and reduces the didactic effectiveness of the whole teaching. The pedagogical effectiveness of teaching in which several subjects are alternated is higher than in monothematically composed teaching (Skalková, 1999).

In terms of specific content, there is a push for pragmatism and highly practical topics. Low-skilled participants tend to be highly sensitive to any theorising. They are also often reluctant to independently deduce the usefulness of training. The trainer must therefore communicate the practical relevance of the training directly to the participants.

8. 2 Environment, tools and materials

Environment

Classrooms should be located in a quiet environment so as to low-skilled participants can concentrate on the learning. Noisy environments make verbal communication difficult, disrupt participants' attention and can seriously impair short-term memory mechanisms. This target group may also have negative attitudes towards education in general based on their previous experiences. The positive emotions needed for successful learning can also be induced by the choice of the training environment. Monotonous, grey, uncomfortable, poorly lit classrooms with uncomfortable chairs, not allowing for a variable arrangement of space, have a depressing effect on the participants.

Supporting teaching texts

A course or training seminar that is not equipped with written materials for participants is often considered to be of poor quality or poorly prepared. Supporting teaching texts and presentations must be formulated in such a way that they are clear, comprehensible and conducive to participants' understanding of the text. From a formal point of view, learning materials for adults over 35 years of age require the use of more contrasting colours, in particular for diagrams and charts. For low-skilled participants, this can also be motivating. It is necessary take into account that only a certain amount of written text will be acceptable for self-study by low-skilled participants. In adult education, scripts, syllabi, theses and workbooks or worksheets are most commonly used. For low-skilled workers, workbooks/worksheets are very suitable. Since this format is usually used directly in the classroom, this will give participants a good understanding of the structure. Worksheets also tend to have less coherent text. The fact that the participants co-create the worksheets and can include their own experience of the issues is also motivating. After the course, they also have a kind of proof of their own study work.

8. 3 Didactic transformations

From a didactic point of view, **so-called multisensory learning** is recommended.

This means that if the same stimulus can be presented through more than one sensory organ at a time, the signals will interconnect with each other, thereby improving the quality of perception and retention.

At a minimum level, verbal instruction should be supported by a visual presentation. Ideally, it should also involve object manipulation to touch the new elements and try the new procedures.

Visual materials should use contrasting colours.

In adult education, the following are commonly used to enhance visualisation and bring the learner closer to practice: wall boards, overhead projector, flipchart, multimedia projectors, instructional video films, video camera, computer and internet. A current trend is the involvement of virtual reality.

> To make teaching as close as possible to the needs of practice,
>
> methods such as case studies are useful,
>
> simulations, role plays and self-assessment.

Case studies and situational methods

The case studies seek to translate the corporate world into model conditions for learning in training spaces. They are a description of the situation in the company with problems to be solved. They are often referred to as **situational methods** in the didactic literature. The aim of situational methods is to put the participants in a situation in which they have to make a decision. Situations can be conveyed to participants either in text form or as a narrative, audio/video recording, on a PC etc. All information to solve the problem can be given to the participants or they have to find some of the missing ones themselves (Maňák and Švec, 2003). For low-skilled course participants, situational methods are very suitable because they motivate active participation and link learning with practice, and thus the learning content is meaningful.

Name	Description
Method of situation analysis	*Participants will be given a description of the problem situation. They analyse the conditions and causes of the situation. There may be a plenary discussion; a clear conclusion is sought.*
Conflict method	*A simpler dispute (conflict between people) is solved. The discussion may not lead to clear conclusions. The trainer must not allow presumption of conditions and should not evaluate the correctness of the solution.*

Gradual familiarisation method	The trainer gives a brief report (of the situation). Participants use questions about specific persons to obtain information for deeper analysis, to determine the causes and to propose necessary measures. This is followed by an assessment of the solution, causes and possibilities for prevention.
Incident method	Information is communicated gradually, in stages. Several possible solutions are presented and the participants decide on the optimal one. The formulation of the first situation assignment does not contain all the necessary and relevant information for the case....

Simulations, role plays, staging methods

The aim of these methods is to learn new forms and ways of behaving (Mazacova, 2014, Lacina, Kotrba, 2011). For this reason, they are often referred to as social role-playing methods. However, in order to use them with low-skilled participants, the trainer needs to know the target group sufficiently to assess the extent to which the group relationships enable them. This is because a learning environment with a higher level of psychological safety is a prerequisite for the application of role-playing methods. However, with proper organization, some elements of the production can be incorporated in all groups. Depending on the organisation, we distinguish between structural staging, non-structural staging and multifaceted role-playing.

Staging methods	Description
Structural staging	It is about the content, verbal and affective representation of the role. Everyone is given a description of the initial situation, their role or task. These descriptions are specific, but not to the level of dialogue. It is useful to divide the participants into performers and observers.
Unstructured productions	The production has an improvised character, which places higher demands on the creativity of the participants, who are only given a starting situation. The number of actors is small (2 - 3 people). Duration 5 - 20 min.
Versatile role-playing	All participants are involved in the production. They are divided into groups according to the number of roles. Each participant knows only his/her role. After the acting is over, the results are discussed in plenary. Note: It would be preferable to work in separate rooms, but then the trainer has less insight into the production process. The disadvantage is the time-consuming nature of the implementation and evaluation.

Discussion methods

It is very beneficial for low-skilled participants to include

different types of discussions. The opportunity to express your own opinion

and sharing experiences raises participants' self-esteem

and ensures good feedback for the trainer.

Occasionally, participants may experience reluctance and be afraid to disagree, but this can be dealt with by discussing at the team level.

Possibility of individual presentation can be offered to low-skilled participants offer it, they cannot be forced.

The art of managing a discussion lies in the correct formulation and asking of questions. The following tables present a battery of different types of discussion questions (Kotrba, Lacina, 2011, p. 124 -125).

- According to the needs of group dynamics

Questions	Principle of use	Example
Beginning	They open the discussion	*Are current political developments affecting workplace relations?*
Provocative	They help stir up a boring discussion	*Is there any form of discrimination in the company?*
Direct	They engage even less communicative learners	*I'd like to hear from those who haven't spoken yet...*
Suggestive	Influence the opinion of the discussion partner	*I'm sure they're all trying to make their point, aren't they?*

According to the involvement of cognitive processes

Questions	Principle of use	Example
Probing	The aim is to equip yourself with facts and knowledge	*How many employees does your company have?* *What is OHS?*
To observe	They build on previous observations of the phenomenon, the reality	*How is the inventory recorded?*
Problematic	They should look for a solution to a condition, situation, phenomenon	*Why is this procedure recommended?*
To assess the situation	The debater is to judge and draw connections	*What could have happened if my colleague hadn't labelled it correctly?*
Decision-making	Participants choose from two or more options	*Which topic would you like to discuss first (A or B)?*

In addition to a frontal discussion with the whole group, e.g. in a brainstorming session, the discussion can be organised in different ways.

Ways of organising the discussion

Chain discussion

The instructor raises a problem question and gives his answer, his point of view. Another participant summarizes the trainer's opinion and adds his/her own argument. The third member of the chain discussion again summarizes and follows up, further developing the discussion.

Discussion from question to question

In groups of 4-6, participants answer a question written on wrapping paper. After writing the answer, the whole group moves to the next wrapping paper and assesses the answer of the previous group and adds their own answer. In this way they answer all the questions in turn. The last group presents the development of the answers.

Panel discussion

The participants are led by a panel of various experts who comment on the issue from their own perspective, after which they begin to discuss among themselves and then with the whole plenary (Maňák, 1997).

Snowball method	Thesis-based discussion	Circular conversation
The task is first processed by the individual. Then the participants solve the task in pairs, later in fours, and finally in groups of eight, i.e. they "pack up" like a snowball when building a snowman (Rohlíková, Vejvodová, 2012, p. 50).	*The first step is self-study. The trainer will hand out independent excerpts from the literature. The purpose of this method is (in addition to the actual discussion of the topic) to work with the text. The trainer prepares questions or asks someone to give a report, followed by a discussion (Kotrba, Lacina, 2011).*	*Everyone is expressing themselves on a given topic for as long as they need to. When he/she or she has nothing more to say, he/she or she passes the chosen symbol (toy, pencil, whatever) to the next person in the circle to show who has the floor. The participant can skip the answer - just say "I skip". The conversation ends when everyone has taken a turn or when no one has anything left to say.*

Discussion spider web

Participants write the question they will solve as a group at the top of the paper. Below the question, they divide the sheet of paper into two parts with a vertical line. In the left part they will collect the "yes" arguments, in the right part the "no" arguments. Each participant will come up with two 'yes' and two 'no' arguments to the above question and justify them. They will then exchange opinions with their neighbour and, if some of theirs strike their fancy, they will write them down to go with their arguments. The participants then form foursomes in which they exchange their views, enriching their lists with new arguments if necessary. This is followed by a collective evaluation.

Group work

- **Advantages of group work:** activates, minimizes shyness, combines more knowledge, confrontation with the trainer is converted into confrontation in the group, does not allow as much space for showing off and blocking.

- **Disadvantages of group work:** increased time required (division of participants, evaluation of group work), noise.

When working with low-skilled participants, use competitions very carefully. Individuals with lower self-esteem experience defeat more intensely. For this reason, it is better to compete as a group or a team.

In this case, however, it is necessary to assemble teams proportionately to even the playing field. If we do need to include an individual competition, do not show the overall results but only say who is the most successful one.

Suggestions for splitting in groups	
into pairs	**into groups**
Place the matching cards in the room, each participant chooses one and finds its counterpart.	*We can let the participants divide themselves.*
On blank cards, write the names of famous people. Always put the first name on one card of the pair and the last name on the other.	*Participants will line up either completely randomly or alphabetically. Then simply put them into 1-4, 1-5, etc. You can change the criteria in different ways.*
On blank cards, write familiar pairs (Pat and Mat, Homer and Marge, Bob and Bobek, etc.)	*Groups can be divided by drawing from a deck of cards.*
Buy 2 different packages of candy or other sweets. Each player either chooses or draws one candy.	*They can draw different worksheets.*
Cut the string into pieces corresponding to half of the participants. Wrap it under a hat or cap and let only the ends show.	*Dividing by opinion: those who liked this solution will stand on the right, those who did not will remain seated.*

Problem-based learning

The basis of all activation methods is problem-based learning. It is characterized by the fact that the trainer poses a problem to the participants, through which the need to understand and think about something new arises**.** Problem-based learning is one of the most effective methods that promote the development of thinking, problem-solving skills and overcoming difficulties. It differs from other didactic methods mainly because at the beginning we do not have all the necessary information to successfully solve the problem. Elements of the problem-based approach can be incorporated into educational courses through problem-based questions and problem-based tasks.

When applying problem-based learning, it is important to expect that because of the stress response

this practice disadvantages older age and

low-education groups, i.e. low-skilled workers.

Mild fear and mild frustration have a positive effect on problem solving, but only up to a certain limit. That's why it is better to use problem-based learning in more homogeneous groups in terms of educational level.

Problem questions are those that activate thinking.
Why ....? How would you explain...? Prove...? How is ...?   *How is it different ...? What is the basic difference ...?   What is the cause of ...?*   *Which common features ...?   How can we use ...?*   *Identify ... Compare ... Describe ...*

Progressive problem-based tasks	
1. Complete the incomplete text. 2. Arrange an irregular compilation of facts into a whole. 3. Find and correct a deliberate error in the assignment. 4. Select the data that does not belong in the task. 5. Answer a negative question and convert it into a positive one. 6. Think of a sentence, a narrative, an example that solves a situation.	7. Choose the correct solution from two or three solutions. 8. Provide evidence for a definition and give an example of a violation of that definition. 9. Find the principle of the presented scheme. 10. Suggest possible solutions to a problem. 11. Discover the problem in cooperation with other students. 12. Independently discover a problem, formulate it, hypothesize and justify a solution.

8. 4 Strengthening the motivation of participants

We can speak of sufficient motivation to learn if the learning objective is of value to the participants. In addition, active involvement in the learning process, in the form of learners' participation in decision-making, shared responsibility for setting goals, plans, implementation and evaluation of learning, free expression and free access to information, is motivating. Motivating low-skilled participants also means relieving them of anxiety about possible failure. It means reassuring them that they have the necessary skills, continuously evaluating them positively and reinforcing their self-esteem in other ways. In order to activate intrinsic motivation to learn, it is necessary to visibly link the learning to past experience and to practice, to induce situations of positive social response and to explain the meaning and importance of education. Particularly with low-skilled learners, motivation is also supported by expressing respect for the personalities of the participants.

8.5 Time management

The specifics of the instruction time management lie mainly in the need to include more frequent breaks, both to maintain attention and for physical stretching. Low-skilled participants are not used to sitting for long periods of time due to their job description. Incorporating breaks is also important because of declining attention.

8. 6 Didactic recommendations for working with low-skills

The trainer should organize the teaching in such a way that allows the adult low-skilled workers to gain confidence that they are successful in their studies.

For example, the trainer can let them choose more complex tasks, allow them to pace themselves individually. In heterogeneous groups he/she can induce situations in which low-skilled participants can excel, e.g. have two-stage assignments.

Low-skilled participants also need more frequent repetition of key elements of the curriculum, preferably always at a time of reduced attention.

Memorisation of the material can be supported by trainer ensuring a correct and complete perception learning stimuli = meaningful material.

For mechanical retention, e.g. of numbers and symbols, support with mnemonic aids is recommended.

When training psychomotor skills it is necessary to adjust the resulting speed to the age participants and slow down the demonstration phase. This is also true when teaching IT skills.

As far as the **trainer's speech is concerned**, it is important that he speaks slowly, clearly and loud enough, and writes foreign words and numbers down on the board. This helps to compensate for hearing loss due to age or the noisy traffic in which the low-skilled participant works.

9 Innovative approaches to training low-skilled participants

The application of innovative approaches in vocational corporate training is always related to the level of creativity of the trainer and the requirements for the development of creativity of the trainees. It is not true that creativity is not demanded from low-skilled trainees, who usually work in lower positions within the corporate hierarchy. Current practice suggests otherwise. Enterprises that have implemented one of the continuous quality improvement systems (e.g. Kaizen) try to involve all their employees in the improvement processes.

> For the development of creativity it is advisable to apply special practices such as brainstorming, lateral thinking, morphological methods and strategy games.

> *Brainstorming appears to be most appropriate for use with low-skill participants. It does not require the participant to prepare for a long time, it can be applied "here and now", giving the trainer the opportunity to motivate participants to produce ideas directly and can thus have a positive effect on the lower learning self-confidence of low-skilled workers.*

9.1 Brainstorming

The basis of brainstorming is the activity of the participants. They have to produce as many ideas as possible in a certain amount of time. The emphasis is on the quantity, not the quality of the ideas. Therefore, production must be separated from evaluation and the expression must be brief, in words or simple phrases. Only after a certain amount of time has elapsed are ideas analysed, looking for similarities, differences and generalisations. Brainstorming can be used in group work, in pairs and individually (Gregorcová, 2008, p. 50).

Principles of brainstorming
The principle of non-criticism.
Equality of participants.
The principle of absolute freedom of ideas.
The principle of quantity over quality.
Mutual continuity - combinations, associations.
The principle of loss of copyright to an idea.
Relaxed, quiet environment.

Brainstorming analogy

- Brainwriting (6 - 3 - 5)

This is the written equivalent of brainstorming. The problem is analysed in groups, solutions are written, circulated. A group of 6 participants presents 3 solutions to a given problem, they have 5 minutes. The evaluation is done together with the trainer.

- Phillips 66

Brainstorming for a larger number of participants. Groups of 6, where a 6-minute discussion takes place. Group leaders meet and discuss. The final solution is facilitated by the trainer.

9. 2 Strategic and didactic games

Strategic games are designed to simulate the life of a company or a section of it and most often take the form of management games, which are protected by copyright. However, it is didactic games of a more general nature that are usually included in the training of low-skilled participants. These methods must also be used sensitively by the trainer with low-skilled participants, always based on knowledge of the specific learner group. Some participants may find the games very motivating, others may argue that they are not entirely appropriate to their particular situation and position in the company, and some may get the impression that the trainer is treating them like children.

In this respect, there is currently a lot of discussion about so-called **gamification in education**.

Gamification

The term gamification refers to the use of games, game principles in non-game contexts to create a game-like experience (Kurilenko, Biryukova, Akhnina, 2020). Gamification is a trend in education that is gradually beginning to influence the teaching of primary and secondary school students. We see great potential in the use of gamification also in low-skill adult education. Gamification using computer games significantly motivates young people to learn. The game design and the possibility of wider use of various game elements such as points, badges, rankings, difficulty levels, etc. are essential (Kurilenko, Biryukova, & Akhnina, 2020). However, this didactic approach is not yet sufficiently developed for vocational education content.

9. 3 Non-traditional trends in andragogy

All the approaches and methods described above focus primarily on the participant's reasoning skills and conscious activities. Non-traditional approaches focus on unconscious structures. As an example, we will mention approaches that are linked to the guidance of the trainer: suggestopedia, teaching for both halves of the brain.

Suggestopedia

Suggestopedic didactic system includes the action of didactic, psychological and artistic means, thus going beyond the action of classical didactic systems. It is always implemented through a trainer. The basic features of suggestopedia: it unleashes new mental capacities, the teaching is not tiring but therapeutic, learning is perceived as a pleasure, the social integration of the participants is improved. Elements of the suggestopedic system: relaxation, imagination, creative fantasy, music, positive suggestion.

When teaching low-skilled workers, elements of suggestopedia can be good to use e.g. when participants need to increase current level of attention, calm down, create a pleasant atmosphere, etc.

For this purpose, some mindfulness techniques can be useful (paying attention to the present moment).

Teaching for both halves of the brain

The essence of teaching for both halves of the brain is to channel information to both parts of the brain. Neurophysiological research has shown that people are more likely to process information sequentially in the left half of the brain, which functions as a temporal, analytical, causal and consequential sequential processor. The trainer's facial expressions, pauses, overall behaviour, nonverbal communication, and spatial relationships that complete the meaning of a message are perceived by the right hemisphere. This method is used to create connections.

Instruction procedure:

1. The teacher first pronounces the concept and then writes it down on the board.
2. Keywords or simple drawings are used.
3. The placement of the written text should show certain relationships.
4. The board should be blank before the trainer writes a new concept.

Conclusion

The methodological manual "VOCATIONAL CORPORATE LOW-SKILLS TRAININGS MANUAL" was created in frame of the Erasmus+ project "VET lector's competencies improvement in accordance with low-skills", reg. no. 2021-1-CZ01-KA210-VET-000034599, which is co-financed by the EU and whose beneficiary is the Czech educational agency LASERneedle CZ s.r.o. and partner is the Slovak educational agency Topcoach s.r.o. The aim of the project is to increase the competence and professional qualification of trainers of vocational courses for teaching low-skilled workers. The project reflects the current trends in andragogy, so that trainers of vocational enterprise courses can apply specific procedures and didactic methods of adult education when teaching low-skilled workers and prepare professional courses for low-skilled participants to be more attractive and made in the spirit of an inclusive approach.

This methodological manual provides methodological support for both vocational corporate trainers and HR specialists who organise and provide corporate training. The information and recommendations contained in this methodological manual are based on both from the professional literature as well as years of experience of the team of trainers of both partner companies that participated in the preparation of the manual.

Both project partners will continue to focus on vocational training of low-skilled participants and its specificities, as the efforts so far have shown the need to elaborate further related topics. It is necessary to determine the professional status of internal and external trainers of vocational corporate training, to assess the possibilities of training foreigners in the context of low-skills, last but not least, to expand the range of innovative educational practices suitable for low-skilled workers, especially in digital form.

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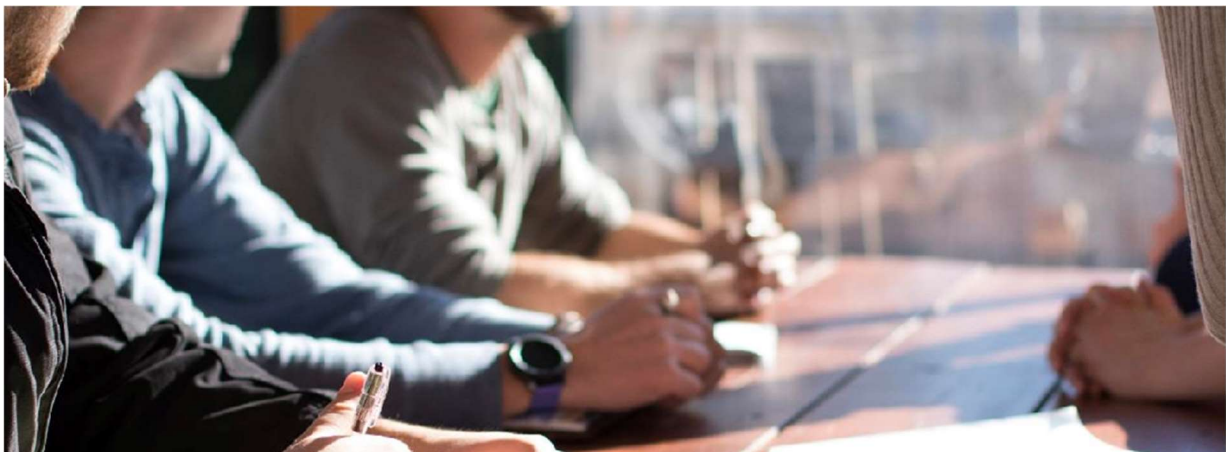
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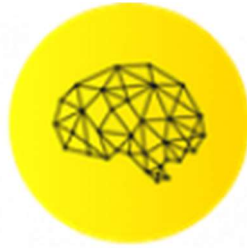
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VOCATIONAL CORPORATE LOW-SKILLS TRAININGS MANUAL

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This methodological manual reflects current trends in andragogy and provides methodological support in the field of vocational corporate training of low-skilled workers for both trainers and HR specialists who provide and organize vocational courses of continuing lifelong learning at corporate workplaces.

The information and recommendations contained in this methodological manual are based on both the professional literature and the years of experience of the team of trainers of both partner companies that participated in the preparation of the manual.