

Methodological Support For Teaching Foreign Languages In Professional Education

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Received: 27 September 2025; **Accepted:** 19 October 2025; **Published:** 24 November 2025

Abstract: As the main directions for improving the organizational and methodological work, the following are proposed: optimization of the schedule, optimization of group composition, rotation of teachers, and exchange of pedagogical experience. The latter demonstrates the interconnection between the studied topic and human resource provision in continuing professional education (CPE), highlighting another dimension of the relationship between economics and pedagogy. Special attention is paid to the organizational work of methodologists aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the teaching staff in CPE, as well as to the specifics of the adult learner contingent, which makes the training of socially mature and economically active learners a highly specialized type of pedagogical activity. Organizational and methodological support can mitigate both didactic and psychopedagogical difficulties arising in the educational process.

Keywords: Continuing professional education, adult learning, corporate training, administrative activity, class schedule, group composition, pedagogical experience exchange, educational management.

Introduction: Organizational and Methodological Support of the Educational Process

Organizational and methodological support of the educational process should be understood as the social relations among its participants, as well as with the administration of the educational institution, occurring outside the classroom. Unlike direct interaction among participants in the educational process, these relationships influence it indirectly (and are often underestimated), yet collectively they create a set of important didactic conditions for effective language acquisition. Organizational and methodological support aims at the efficient use of available administrative and human resources of the educational organization.

Although different types of CPE (professional retraining, skills enhancement, and corporate training) have their own characteristics, from an organizational and methodological perspective, the essential features of the first two are similar, as training occurs directly within the educational institution, whereas corporate training is usually conducted outside it.

Directions of Organizational and Methodological Support

Organizational and methodological support as one of the directions of CPE development involves several vectors of activity for teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel of the institution. Each of them is considered below.

1. Optimization of Class Schedules

Although the total amount of contact hours specified by the educational program is the primary condition for achieving didactic goals, the temporal distribution of these hours significantly affects how efficiently classroom time is used.

Currently, one major challenge is that schedule creation is often dictated by the availability of individual teachers on specific days. Nevertheless, with competent personnel management, it is possible to prioritize the CPE workload for instructors. Additionally, CPE classes are usually held either in the early morning or evening hours when part-time instructors are not engaged in their primary jobs. Under favorable staffing conditions, it is therefore possible to create schedules that account for key factors of the educational process, the specifics of the discipline, and the characteristics of the adult learner group.

The specificity of the discipline necessitates systematic classes, which are more effective even with a smaller amount of material than infrequent immersion sessions, and also require a substantial volume of independent work. Therefore, weekend-only classes, as practiced in some university extramural programs, are not very effective for language learning. Even if an adult learner can spend all day Saturday in the institution and then work independently, the frequency of classes would remain low, and a five-day gap between sessions is considered excessive for effective language acquisition, especially in intensive programs.

The discipline's specificity is closely linked to the characteristics of the adult learner contingent: economically active adults have limited time for independent work outside weekends. Therefore, weekday classes are preferable. For most programs, two classroom sessions per week are optimal. If the learner studies once on weekends, this totals three sessions per week, providing roughly a class every other day, which is considered the maximum frequency suitable for adult learners.

Accordingly, scheduling two consecutive weekday classes or long gaps between independent work and the next class is impractical. Considering factors such as worker fatigue on Friday evenings and personal plans, the most favorable schedule for language learning in CPE would be Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Thursday.

2. Optimization of Group Composition

Group composition is particularly important in foreign language learning, as learners continuously interact and communicate. While the division of all learners into groups depends on the overall enrollment, in practice small language groups often allow for such division. Grouping should be based on the analysis of results from preliminary surveys.

Traditionally, group division considers only the learners' level of knowledge. While this criterion is important, it is not always sufficient, especially when teaching beginners or a new language, or in large groups with similar linguistic proficiency.

Additional criteria are therefore required, which should be both pedagogically justified and administratively simple, without the need for extra procedures. For professional retraining courses in foreign languages, the following criteria are relevant:

1. Professional Field: Having a large number of participants from the same profession or sector simplifies content selection and creates a socio-psychological effect, helping learners find common

ground and share professional experience.

2. Age of Learners: Despite CPE being adult education, age distribution matters. Learners with extensive work experience in managerial positions may not find discussions with younger beginners professionally relevant. A practical age boundary can be 30–35 years, by which most learners have significant professional experience and career progression.

Undoubtedly, the criterion of professional experience and position is conditional, since experience and positions do not always correlate directly. Therefore, attention should be paid to the social status of learners. Social status serves as a criterion for creating psychologically comfortable interaction within the group. Generally, individuals of the same social status subconsciously respect each other more, are attracted to each other, and share similar professional, quasi-professional, and life experiences, which allows for better personal disclosure and supports personal development through the utilization of internal reserves during the learning process.

Personalized communication is a condition for activating and revealing personal potential. Psychologically and pedagogically, adults tend not only to critically evaluate information but also to differentiate between spoken and disseminated information, especially concerning themselves. Most adults can be fully sincere only within a circle of close acquaintances. In a formal group of recently acquainted or unfamiliar participants, it is difficult for adults to open up. Referring to personal life experiences, which differ among participants at this stage of life, may cause discomfort, withdrawal, and reliance on generic statements, reducing both communicative value and motivation.

Hence, professional-personal communication in adult language learning is particularly relevant. Professional topics are relatable to all group members, and adult learners attend classes after work, increasing motivation to share professional experiences. Discussions on professional topics are valuable didactically and help adult learners develop as specialists by evaluating different perspectives and exchanging applicable experience. Professional-personal communication differs from purely professional communication in that participants not only express competent opinions but actively demonstrate their attitude toward a problem, typical of individuals passionate about their profession.

At the content-methodological level, professional-personal communication integrates aspects of foreign language learning that are difficult to develop

simultaneously: professional and emotionally colored vocabulary. Both are important for adults: professional vocabulary forms the course foundation, while emotionally colored words distinguish a “human” foreign language from machine-translated language, which is crucial in the 21st century.

These criteria can be applied through simple analysis of adult learners’ survey data upon enrollment. More detailed criteria, such as hobbies and interests, are necessary only with a large learner flow. Three criteria, alongside the main one—language proficiency—provide sufficient variability for group composition.

In corporate training, group composition is less problematic because:

1. Participants typically belong to the same organization and are already acquainted.
2. Group formation is often managed by organization leaders, following local principles from work schedules to interpersonal relations. However, CPE can advise on the pedagogical appropriateness of such grouping.

Corporate groups are usually formed from one department or team, which is organizationally logical. Client-oriented organizations adapt to each company’s specifics.

In skills enhancement programs, subgroup division is less critical because these programs are shorter and attended by professionals already proficient in a foreign language. Specialized social-psychological conditions are generally unnecessary, as participants share a similar professional profile and prior language experience.

Teacher Rotation in CPE

Teacher rotation is a systematic and justified replacement of instructors within a group. Foreign language teaching, due to its socio-communicative nature, makes adaptation to a new teacher challenging. However, rotation is necessary for learners to experience interaction with different instructors. Rotation is effective only if methodically justified, for example:

- **Rotation by modules or disciplines:** Relevant for professional retraining programs covering multiple subjects. Common in language departments and large universities with sufficient staff resources.
- **Occasional lessons by different teachers:** Requires justification, e.g., guest instructors as experts or for master classes, enhancing discussion quality and pedagogical value.
- **Team teaching:** Common in corporate training, alternating native speakers and local instructors to

combine communicative and traditional teaching approaches. Teacher pairs should differ in social-psychological characteristics and coordinate methodologically.

Experience Exchange

Experience exchange is crucial in CPE because the system encompasses retraining, skills enhancement, and corporate training. Teachers can learn new practices, contributing to the universalization of CPE instructors, enabling them to work flexibly within the system without extra workloads.

Organizational-methodological significance of experience exchange includes:

1. Supporting teachers’ self-improvement.
2. Developing self-analysis and reflection skills.
3. Introducing original pedagogical methods not found in textbooks.

Experience exchange occurs via mutual lesson observations and methodological seminars. Methodologists coordinate these activities, create schedules, and analyze reports. Their participation enhances quality control and fosters a supportive exchange of practices, rather than perceived evaluation, positively affecting the psychological climate.

Workshops integrate seminar and master class elements. Methodologists lead, while instructors act as learners to practice and discuss methods. Benefits include high practical engagement, small group interaction, active participation, frequent activity changes, and minimal preparation burden on teachers.

CONCLUSION

The main administrative measures in organizational-methodological support of foreign language learning in CPE are:

- Optimizing schedules.
- Optimizing group composition.
- Teacher rotation.
- Organizing experience exchange.

Organizational-methodological work in CPE intertwines didactic, psycho-pedagogical, and socio-economic aspects, including human resource and educational management. Hence, it represents an integral aspect of pedagogy and the developing field of education economics. The approaches described can serve as a basis for interdisciplinary research in educational management and pedagogy.

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