



# Characteristic Features of Metropolitan and Provincial Silver Education and Aging Pedagogy

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## Abstract

Adult education is becoming more and more popular in Russia. It takes on different features and trajectories in Moscow and in the provinces. Aging pedagogy accumulates experience and begins to acquire its own, very peculiar methods and methodology. The problems of metropolitan and provincial education for pensioners have both general and specific features. The aim of the work is to identify the similarities and differences between the metropolitan and provincial silver education and aging pedagogy. The study is based on the he system-thought-activity methodology of G.P. Shchedrovitsky. Research methods: sociological questioning, in-depth interviews, demoscopic analysis. Despite the contrast between metropolitan and provincial adult education, the study found some similarities. However, the revealed provinciality allows building an equal dialogue between the capital Moscow Silver University and the third Generation University in Elabuga. The results of the research can be used in the development of courses on aging pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Metropolitan; Province; Aging pedagogy; Silver university; Third generation university; Pandemic

## Introduction

Russian regions have a large demographic resource of people of the "third age", who not only lead an active lifestyle, but also demonstrate an increase in labor and educational activity with the entry into retirement age. Attention should also be paid to the fact that, according to the results of a study by Rosstat in Russia, the number of people older than working age continues to grow and makes up more than a quarter of the country's population.

For their full inclusion in the economic and socio-cultural life of the region, it is necessary to ensure the involvement of this rather large segment of the population in the system of continuous education. In this regard, an increasing number of educational organizations are beginning to understand the need to organize educational programs for the elderly. Along with the metropolitan educational organizations, the importance of such work is also recognized in the provincial educational institutions of Russia. On

the one hand, the disparate practices and approaches to organizing the education of people of the "third age" and their employment that have developed in the regions have not yet created grounds for turning "silver" education into an element of the regional system of continuous education and a resource for socio-economic and socio-cultural development [1]. On the other hand, these practices and approaches to educating people of the "third age" in the regions of Russia have their own specific distinctive features.

## Formulation of the Problem

There is a need to consider the features of metropolitan and provincial silver education and aging pedagogy as two types of national existence. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to identify the characteristic features of the capital and provincial education of people of silver age (for example, the capital - Moscow and the province - Elabuga). The research hypothesis is

that older people's education may take on different characteristics depending on geographic location.

## Methodology and Methods

The methodological basis of the study is the system-thought-activity methodology of G.P. Shchedrovitsky [2]. Namely, the provision on the historical nature of human thinking (genetism), which gives us reason to consider the phenomenon under study from the point of view of its historical development and formation. The leading methodological principle is the principle of "orchestra". G.P. Shchedrovitsky in "Pedagogy and Logic" gave a kind of orchestral arrangement of educational activities, including the student as a subject of activity, as well as introducing such new positions as the organizer of the educational process, theorist-methodologist, intellectual engineering and others. Actually, in the modern practice of aging pedagogy, this principle of the orchestra operates, which is expressed in the fact that aging students, due to their age and life experience, are very wary and skeptical of those who will teach them. They firmly believe that they have enough knowledge for someone else to teach them. Therefore, only thanks to the talent of the "conductor of this orchestra", in our understanding of the teacher who organizes classes with these students, "masterpieces" will be created. The following methods formed the empirical basis of the study: sociological questioning, in-depth interviews, and demoscopic analysis.

## Results

### Capital-periphery-province: conceptual features in the russian mentality

In most European languages, the main city of the country "capitol" is etymologically connected with the head (capita): "a place where people think about the country", a city that primarily performs administrative, government (government) functions regarding the territory of the country or region. In the Russian mentality, the main city is associated with the table: "a place where they eat the country", and do not think about it. This idea, which has existed for more than a thousand years, is very stable: only 8-9% of the population of Russia lives in Moscow, but 80-90% of all the country's money and financial resources revolve here. This leads to the fact that centripetal forces, including migration ones, clearly prevail in Russia. The rest of the country's territory is presented from the capital as a periphery of varying degrees of remoteness from this capital. The peripheral mentality is built practically on an inferiority complex, on the misfortune of being born on the periphery and the acute desire of the population to leave this periphery, one way or another to end up in the capital, "at the table". The peripheral and metropolitan mentality is opposed by the provincial mentality. The very concept of

"province" goes back to Provence, which achieved cultural autonomy from Rome. The province is, first of all, self-recognition and self-affirmation of its cultural and historical intrinsic value and independence. So, for example, today's Tataria remembers well that it arose on the site of the Volga Bulgaria, a state older and more powerful than Muscovy, that it, Bulgaria, was subjugated by the Golden Horde only after a very long resistance, while Muscovy became part of Golden Horde voluntarily, in the status of the Russian Ulus. Provincial self-consciousness, in particular, in Tataria, is built on the basis of self-sufficiency, self-respect and pride in one's provinciality as unlikeness and contrast to other provinces and, of course, the capital city. In this regard, we took two diametrically opposed cities: Moscow, as a bright representative of the capital with the Moscow Silver University and Yelabuga, as an example of provinciality with the Third Generation University.

### Continuing Education (LLE) - age differences and phases

As a result of the analysis of various philosophical, sociological and psychological-pedagogical literature, in particular, we found that continuous education LLE (lifelong education) is usually considered very monotonously, not differentiated in relation to those receiving this education. As a rule, LLE is understood only as the process of educating people until the end of their lives and the age characteristics of those receiving this education (who specifically receives education) are omitted, namely, the fact that these people are very different, and, therefore, they go through very contrasting phases in education throughout their life path [3-6]. An example of a differentiated approach to education and life path is given by Confucius: "At the age of fifteen, I turned my thoughts to study. At the age of thirty, I became independent. At the age of forty, I got rid of my doubts. At fifty, I knew the will of heaven. At the age of sixty, I learned to distinguish truth from untruth. At the age of seventy, I began to follow the desires of my heart. In contrast to this approach to education and the life path, at present, a different chronology of events of the life educational path has developed in modern science, which are divided into the following phases:

- The adaptation phase, characterized by the fact that at the age of 10 years (conditionally) there is predominantly cultural adaptation (mastery of speech and language, cultural norms of behaviour, everyday culture, spiritual culture (religion), national culture, culture of literature, theatre, cinema and others arts). In the teenage age, social adaptation prevails, the acquisition of social experience and social circle, social, civil, national, gender self-determination and self-identification. It is at this age that riots and outbursts of social indignation occur, requiring curbing, humility (for



someone it turns into marriage, for someone - an army, for someone - a prison, but in any case - a yoke and hobbled on a fetlock joint). The next decade of life is a professional, economic, economic and political adaptation, the actual adaptation to the foundations and foundations, ways of life. It is at the end of adaptation that youth ends. It should be noted that at this stage, many remain young all their lives, continuously adapting to changing conditions and circumstances.

- Productive-transformative/mature phase: lasts about three decades of labor and creative activity, when a person is able to resist both society and cultural norms, overcoming them creatively and thus setting new frameworks and horizons of culture, advancing its front. This is the phase of education when not only a person is formed, but also his environment, his life's work.
- cognitive-epistemological phase, which is actually higher education that comes to us in old age, education during which we have the opportunity to know the meaning of our own being, the meaning of life in general and the formation of our intellectual legacy.

This LLE phase or the phase of education at the third age, capital and provincial features of silver education is the subject of this work, based on the already conducted fundamental research. It should be recognized that this was preceded by a large analytical work of sociological and pedagogical content [7-11].

### Moscow Silver University

The work of the Moscow Silver University is organized in five faculties: humanitarian; mass communications and informatics; health and safety; psychological; culture and creativity. Moscow City University (MGPU) is dispersed throughout the city: about 50 buildings in different parts of the city, usually located within walking distance from metro stations. This allows you to bring classes at the Silver University as close as possible to the places of residence of students. The content of education at the Silver University is represented by a wide range of various educational and educational courses and programs, usually short-term (36-52 hours), and specialty courses (doll making, baby nanny, landscape design, etc.). It should be noted that students of the Silver University mainly acquire a new profession not to improve their material well-being (not to go to earn money), but to competently and professionally manage the household (to educate their grandchildren, improve the garden, etc.). University students have the opportunity to choose several courses at the same time. In addition to training courses and programs, amateur student clubs are developing at the university, the most numerous is My Moscow, which has grown up on the basis of the History and Culture of Moscow course. The Moscow Silver University

provides advanced education for teachers, which is achieved by regular seminars on aging pedagogy and fundamental and applied research, in particular, the already mentioned "Philosophy of Old Age". Since the Silver University is still very young, there is a need to conduct frequent and thorough monitoring, in particular, to conduct surveys and interview students and teachers about the directions and methods of education. Much attention is paid to these issues on the site of the Silver University. The pandemic has hit the pace of the university's development, primarily its funding from the Department of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Moscow Government.

### Elabuga Third Generation University

The educational process in Yelabuga is built noticeably differently. But first, a few words about Yelabuga itself. Elabuga as a city is 140 years older than Moscow. The small town of Tatarstan Elabuga with a population of about 75 thousand people is one of the Russian cities of provincial life, distinguished by its special mentality and spirituality. The mentality and spirituality of the Elabuga residents are greatly influenced by both the territorial and geographical location of the city and the historically established identity of the local population, which is revealed in individual, cultural, emotional, mental reactions to certain events within their permanent place of residence. In the memoirs of a local native Ivan Vasilyevich Shishkin, the father of the famous Russian landscape painter Ivan Shishkin (second half of the 19th century), it is mentioned that "Elabuga, the city of the Vyatka province, is located on the right side along the Kama River at a distance of two versts from it, on an elevated sloping flat valley. At the foot of the city flows the river Toima, on which there is a mill, owned by the city, on four looms. The spring flood of water extends for a distance of ten versts, and thus makes it possible for ships to approach the city itself to load different varieties of bread. The city is located on sandy soil, and therefore the air here is constantly dry and healthy; the water is pleasant and healthy, piped from springs discovered near the city to pools built in the city" [12]. The "Strategy for the socio-economic development of the Yelabuga municipal district of the Republic of Tatarstan until 2021 and for the future until 2030" notes that Yelabuga stands out against the general background of the best-preserved small historical towns in Russia with a harmonious combination of the environment, natural landscape and architecture, integral historical buildings, organic combination of numerous museum objects, monuments of history and culture, tourist infrastructure, successful modern socio-economic development. Geographically and historically, the socio-economic conditions of the city of Yelabuga determine the way of life of the people of Yelabuga. To date, Yelabuga remains one of the cities with a developed industrial sector that influences the formation of mental characteristics and traditional values of the local population. It

should be noted that the spiritual life of the inhabitants of Yelabuga takes place against the background of the search for value orientations in the specific historical cultural features of their native land, thereby revealing the mentality of the Yelabuga residents in "the ability to accumulate and transmit national cultural values and ethnic stereotypes" [13]. In 1997, the "University of the Third Age" was formed in Tatarstan. The goal of the university was to create conditions for the realization of the rights of older people to lifelong education (LLE), to meet their individual needs, to increase the intellectual and general cultural level, to promote self-realization and adaptation to modern life. The motto of the University of the Third Age: "Through education to improve the quality of life of older citizens." By the early 2000s, an active process of developing various projects in this direction began [14]. Since 2006, the Regional Branch of the Union of Pensioners of Russia in the Republic of Tatarstan has been consistently implementing a supportive policy for the elderly and has developed a series of events "Active Longevity", which include education as one of the main directions for extending the active life of an elderly person. The project "University of the Third Age", one of the founders of which was Kazan Federal University, started in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2007. This project is being implemented with the support of the branch of the Pension Fund of the Republic and the regional branch of the Union of Pensioners of Russia. At the same time, attention began to be paid to the education of pensioners in Yelabuga. The Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University (KFU), being the flagship of education in the Yelabuga municipal district, along with the education of the younger generation, began to engage in the education of the elderly - the Third Generation University was opened.

## Discussion

The experience of conducting classes with aging students at the Third Generation University of the Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University allows us to draw up a portrait of a provincial student of the third age. For this, such methods were used as diagnosing stress tolerance, assessing psychological age, mental health, severity of loneliness, the level of sociability and communication skills, self-esteem, temperament, conflict, strategies of behavior in a conflict situation. The study involved 187 students aged 62 to 80 years from 2016-2021. According to the results of the study, it was revealed that the main problems that are generally of concern to age students are the psychological issues of harmonious existence with each other, behaviour and attitudes towards other people, as well as questions related to finding answers to the question "how can you help people, and what needs to be done to help other people. Despite the great life experience of older people, they still lack the skills to establish social communications. In this case, the Third Generation

University provides an opportunity to fill these gaps. The manifestation of social interest in an elderly person allows you to experience the contradictions of your age through the creation of various connections with the environment [15]. Students fulfil such needs as a sense of belonging to a group, a sense of community with other people, a belief that there is something good in every person, a feeling that making mistakes is natural, you don't have to be first and right, a sense of yourself man.

Elderly people of Yelabuga are calm about the economic instability in the city, they are more satisfied with the socio-economic situation, but there is a tendency to increase stress in life, which indicates a decrease in the stress resistance of the ages. Respondents also assess their health as normal, but note a lack of physical activity. Despite the presence of a number of negative influences, pensioners are generally satisfied with their lives and feel younger than their years. Diagnostics of the psychological age of students showed that 94% of students (regardless of the year of birth) are full of vitality and self-confidence, optimistic, friendly, full of good spirits, which is confirmed by their high desire to continue their education. It also turned out that older people are not prone to conflicts. The most acceptable way out of conflict situations for them is to avoid conflict. According to the data obtained, the program of the Third Generation University of the Elabuga Institute of KFU is becoming a unique educational platform where moral support for people who have reached retirement age, reducing the risk of social exclusion of older people in society, and achieving mutual understanding between generations play an important role. In addition, the project provides an opportunity to gain self-confidence, show their creative abilities, share their skills, experience and not feel "out of the box" in public life. The continuous motivation of older people in the process of their learning allows them to see new facets of their self-realization. It is also important that in the classroom people of the older generation are taught to develop the ability to navigate in new conditions. In the mentality of the local population, which is largely based on Islam, the usual stereotype is the dogma: "the elders teach the younger ones" - it is difficult for older people to come to terms with the idea that they are taught by younger ones, hence the distrust of them, overcoming which is perhaps the main problem of aging - pedagogy within the walls of the University of the third generation.

The second most important problem is the train of life experience of students, which is not compatible with new knowledge, technologies and pace. Within the framework of the Third Generation University project, there are several free educational programs in such areas as: the basics of computer literacy, psychology, a school of legal knowledge, and a healthy lifestyle. The knowledge and skills gained by ages in the learning process help them in self-realization, adaptation to modern conditions and life, integration into the information and cultural and educational

space. It should be noted that many students choose not one direction of preparation, but several at once. In addition, they express a desire to learn again and again, mastering new courses. In addition, in-depth interviews were taken with the teachers of the Third Generation University to identify the characteristic features of the education of people of the silver age of the Third Generation University. As a result of the interview, we obtained the following results. In general, the teachers of the Third Generation University note that "pensioners are a difficult people." Students always come to the first lesson with the attitude: "I have lived this life, and I know better than anyone what and how to do." As a result, their attitude towards work is rather disdainful. Teachers note that in the first classes, students sit and look at them with their faces, as if they want to say: "Well, what do you want to teach us here?" Agers don't like to listen to advice, like this quote from an interview: "I had a woman who went to the pool every day. I told her that the daily use of the pool is bad for the skin, as the water in the pool is chlorinated. She did not believe me, she continued to walk, but in the end, she was still able to convince her."

However, over time, the attitude of students towards teachers begins to change for the better, but only if the latter make enough professional efforts in the education of mature students and are strict enough with them. It is important that students feel that the teacher knows their subject. In order to achieve the favor of the older generation, you need to be a professional in your field, and know much more than what is stated in this or that lecture, since they, like small children, have increased interrogative activity. If the teacher is a little confused, then you can immediately lose the respect of students. Teachers of the Third Generation University also note that in working with age students, strictness and exactingness are needed on the part of the teacher. All teachers of the University drew attention to the fact that thanks to classes at the University, older people have the opportunity for additional communication, they get together, communicate. Even after classes end, the students do not disperse: they talk for a long time, think where else they can go together. Moreover, they consider studying at the University as a meeting place with acquaintances and friends. However, there are those who do not like it. Such students, of course, leave, but basically the composition remains. Teachers also noticed such a feature in the process of teaching pensioners that they regain their school youth with passion and enthusiasm: someone begins to record lectures in notebooks, someone even comes with a dictaphone. Even in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, students did not lose interest in classes: one of the students created a WhatsApp group to be able to exchange information on the go and make appointments.

## Conclusion

The information obtained in the course of the study made it possible to identify the characteristic features of the capital and provincial silver education and aging pedagogy. Despite the contrast between metropolitan and provincial adult education, some common features should be noted, namely:

- In both Moscow and Yelabuga, there are twice as many women of retirement age as men, but among students, women make up 90% or more; aging education is a female education, while men traditionally treat themselves and their old age in a deeply minor way;
- The majority of aging students are representatives of active old age (up to 70 years), older people are rather exotic;
- Both Moscow and Yelabuga students are most interested in local history and urban educational topics: local history, geography and culture; this interest provides self-identification of people.

At the same time, the differences between the Yelabuga University of the Third Age and the Moscow Silver University are quite significant:

- The coverage of the pension population with education in Moscow is negligible: 18 thousand people in three years, while the number of pensioners in the city is about 4 million people; in Yelabuga, where less than 20,000 pensioners live, this coverage is noticeably higher;
- In Yelabuga, aging education is financed and coordinated by the Pension Fund and the regional branch of the Union of Pensioners, in Moscow - by the Department of Labor and Social Protection, which puts forward strict requirements for the educational process, exercises strict disciplinary control and exposes numerous bureaucratic barriers and barriers, which, fortunately, not observed in Yelabuga;
- The range of educational services in Moscow is much wider and more diverse: programs and courses, master classes, excursions of an educational, educational and entertaining nature; in Yelabuga, courses related to health care, housekeeping and social communication predominate;
- The pandemic and the forced transition to distance learning have more serious consequences for Yelabuga, since here the level of computerization of pensioners, the level of their computer and communication competencies is lower, and the technical means themselves are mostly outdated and are not able to reliably provide on-line education.

In connection with the findings, it is advisable to present some pre-project proposals in work with students of the Third Generation University in Yelabuga. In particular, in order to organize the educational activities of ages, it is proposed to develop courses that, in terms of their content and methodological support, will be as creative and interactive as possible. For example, it is possible to offer such courses as "Native Prikamye"



and "Geography of Travel", the development of which will not involve "working with a book at a desk", but will be aimed at studying maps and literature on the Kama region with visits to the historical places of the native Yelabuga and the immediate environment, if students wish and have the opportunity to travel to more remote areas, search for interesting artifacts, antiques, natural materials, organize visits to museums, etc. Also, based on a fairly rich life experience and knowledge about the events of the past, in which they were once participants, we offer students - agers to act as guides to those historical places that make them want to get to know these cultural and historical objects more deeply. In addition, there is an intention to develop courses aimed at developing agger communication and interactive skills. For example, students have a lot of experience in home canning and needlework. You can offer them such courses as "Home soap making", "Home mushroom factories", "Home harvesting of wild plants", "Bath therapy for the elderly", etc. Thus, the proposed names of courses for students of the Third Generation Yelabuga University certainly indicate that the forms of organizing the educational process with age students should by no means be boring monologues of teachers, but should arouse the interest of students in cognition with the possibility of transferring their personal experience to others [16].

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