

“Bridge 60+” – Recreation and adult learning

(developed by Piotr Błajet¹)

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I. Introduction.

In developmental psychology one can distinguish the three stages of adult human development as:

- early adulthood (from 20 to 30 – 40 years) is the first of the stages characterised by the highest level of ability to absorb and apply knowledge, as well as the appearing relativity in thinking (i.e. the ability to assume that the truth is changeable, gradable, depends on the circumstances) facilitating mutual understanding.
- middle adulthood (from 30 – 40 to 50 – 60 years), during which the majority of intellectual abilities remains at a stable level. The speed of processing of information and reaction reduces with age, but only in the situations in which the time is measured, for example in minutes. Middle-aged people have a tendency to analyse and solve problems slower because of relating them to their own, rich experience. However, this experience and continuous mind activity balances the problems with memory and concentration.

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- late adulthood (above 55 – 66 years, the period otherwise defined as senior age, the third age), characterised by a decrease in intelligence conditioned genetically while at the same time remaining at a stable level, and even sometimes an increase in intelligence dependent on own activity and social determinants. It is the stage of balance between the logical sphere of cognition and the emotional intuitive area.

There is a large variation among adults in terms of their abilities and pace of learning, which is dependent on the past experiences, existing abilities and previous education. That variety sometimes, especially at the beginning of learning to play bridge, can be a cause of confusion. Therefore, a training person should be geared towards **supporting** the participants in solving the intellectual problems which appear during the course of learning to play.

Modern adult education is that in which the teacher does not determine ‘the only right’ path of learning. In return, the teacher as a trainer, facilitator or moderator makes use of **the personal interests, experience and intrinsic motivation** of the adults to learning. Creating a **positive and supportive environment** of learning in order to enable **the cooperation** that gives a sense of security, the teacher motivates the adult student to acquire knowledge **individually**, inspires and reinforces the processes of learning. The learner, thanks to such actions of the teacher, **self-governs** the process of learning to play bridge and their development; he poses himself **the challenges**, and thus reinforces **the feeling of self-causation and self-esteem**.

The guidebook contains the most important and the most essential information for bridge trainers and teachers of adults, with a particular consideration of the specificity of the senior age.

In point II the assumptions of the P-I-W-K-O strategy (by P. Błajet) defining the general rules of the work with seniors are presented. Abiding by those rules is necessary for the seniors’ activity to foster their development and health.

In point III the aims of the recreational activity are presented, self-improvement, leisure and entertainment are matched with the values inherent in the recreational activity, physical, psychical, cognitive-developmental and educational, and cultural.

In point IV the process of learning as a cycle, in which the starting point is the experience of the individual and its analysis, and not, as in the case of the traditional approach, the theoretical introduction, is presented.

In point V there is discussion of the role of the motivation in learning and the factors conditioning the formation of intrinsic motivation are indicated.

In point VI the characteristics of the teacher capable of motivating in a proper way the adult students to learning and facing the challenges are described.

In point VII the process of adult learning (of the andragogical process) is described, depicted and compared with the elements of the process of child and youth learning (of the pedagogical process), indicating the distinctness of the process of adult learning.

In point VIII the possibilities of using modern technologies in the process of adult learning are indicated.

II. The P-I-W-K-O strategy

P-I-W-K-O is the acronym from the first letters of the terms: personalisation, integrality, wrestling with the challenges, knowledge and experience exchange, one's own personal goals.

Personalisation

The action of learning to play bridge should be in accordance with the intentions of the subject including self or team designing, should give happiness, satisfaction and the feeling of success. It is extremely important to understand the sense of the activity and reflexive attitude towards one's own activity, as the feeling and figuring out the sense and the reflection are a key factor of the formation of the intrinsic motivation. In summary, to achieve these results, not only the objective aspect of the actions is important, that is what and how is something done, but the subjective aspect, that is, what importance the bridge learner attributes to a given action is also relevant.

In the process of the adult learning it is essential that the cognitive activities engaged in correspond with the personal preferences and developmental abilities of the learner. Also, one needs to remember that adults learn more effectively at the pace chosen by them than under the pressure of time.

Integrality

Integrality means the accordance between the three spheres 'I', 'we', 'it':

- 'I' (values – goals – individual feelings),
- 'we' (values – goals – group feelings),
- 'it' (vision – strategy – actions – effects).

When the learner takes up a challenge, for instance learning a particular system of bidding in bridge, it is important to obtain the desired effect: the effective use of the system of bidding (the 'it' sphere). However, in order for the process of learning be fully effective, the individual feelings are essential in connection to the use of a given system, his/her thoughts,



the critical remarks, the level of satisfaction (the 'I' sphere). As bridge is a team game, it is also extremely important to what degree the team can communicate and feel the satisfaction and sense of actions with the use of a given system of bidding (the 'we' sphere).

Wrestling with the challenges

A human develops through taking up challenges and being geared to take up a challenge is not only reserved for the young. It has been shown that wrestling with the difficulties, the elements of risk, making attempts going beyond current abilities has its sense and justification also at the senior age. In the course of evolution, the preference for taking up difficult and complex tasks formed in the human nervous system as it conditioned the victory in the struggle for survival. As a result, we feel joy and excitement – exultation, when we wrestle with the challenges going beyond our current abilities, which thanks to these challenges can develop. That is why learning to play bridge should be connected with experiencing difficulties and challenges.

Knowledge and experience exchange

The changes in psychology and depressive moods that can occur at the senior age, anxiety and aversion to the strangers do not favour creating bonds, and the isolation is in turn the factor which reinforces the state of depression. It is not easy to escape from this vicious circle, however, from the point of view of the effectiveness of the strategy of learning, it is essential.

The process of learning runs mainly in interaction with the environment, and knowledge is acquired through the transformation of the experience. Thanks to the opportunity of experiencing different situations and the exchange of experiences with other participants of the process of education, one can learn the most effectively.

Thus, learning to play bridge is a circumstance facilitating the prevention of depression disorders, hostility, depression and isolation. The situation of the knowledge and experience exchange, the cooperation in taking up the challenges connected with the game facilitates creating closer relationships and making friends. The cooperation in the group allows one to verify one's own abilities among peers.

The cooperation can involve various spheres of life:

- living – for instance helping
- personal health – for example giving assistance
- connected with the free time – for instance communal fun, playing bridge,
- social activity – for example using the direct relationships and on-line, also in learning bridge.

One's own personal goals

The seniors should be guided in their activity by the so called principle of rational egoism, according to which it is always rational to strive for one's own greatest good (that is moral and virtuous), and other conduct is not right. Whereas, the sacrifice for others instead of the execution of one's own goals can prevent experiencing pleasure, joy, and experiencing positive states at the senior age is an antidote to the results of the depressive action of 'hell of a mixture': the decreased serotonin level and the increased cholesterol level. Guided in the activity by one's own pleasure and anticipation of one's own satisfaction can facilitate taking the initiative in accordance with one's own needs, without feeling guilty. Such an attitude has something of the child liveliness, but not insanity, as the egoistic liveliness will be corrected by the rational responsibility. Pleasure, satisfaction and liveliness should be the share of the seniors playing bridge.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

- 1. The senior's activities should be in accordance with his/her intentions including self- or team-designing, should give joy, satisfaction and the feeling of success.*
- 2. In order for learning to play bridge to be fully effective, not only taking care of the external effects (the 'it' sphere) is essential, but also taking care of the feelings and satisfaction (the 'I' sphere) and of the feeling of team compatibility and cohesion (the 'we' sphere).*
- 3. Taking up the challenges is not only reserved for the young age, wrestling with the difficulties, the elements of risk, making attempts that go beyond the current abilities has its sense and justification also at the senior age.*
- 4. The process of learning runs mainly in the interaction with the environment, and the knowledge is acquired through the transformation of the experience. Thanks to the possibility of experiencing various situations and the exchange of the experiences with the other participants of the process of education, one can learn the most effectively.*
- 5. The situation of the knowledge and experience exchange (the cooperation) in taking up the challenges facilitates creating closer relationships and making friends.*
- 6. The seniors should be guided in their activity by the principle of rational egoism, according to which it is always rational to strive for one's own greatest good.*

III. The values of the recreational activity model

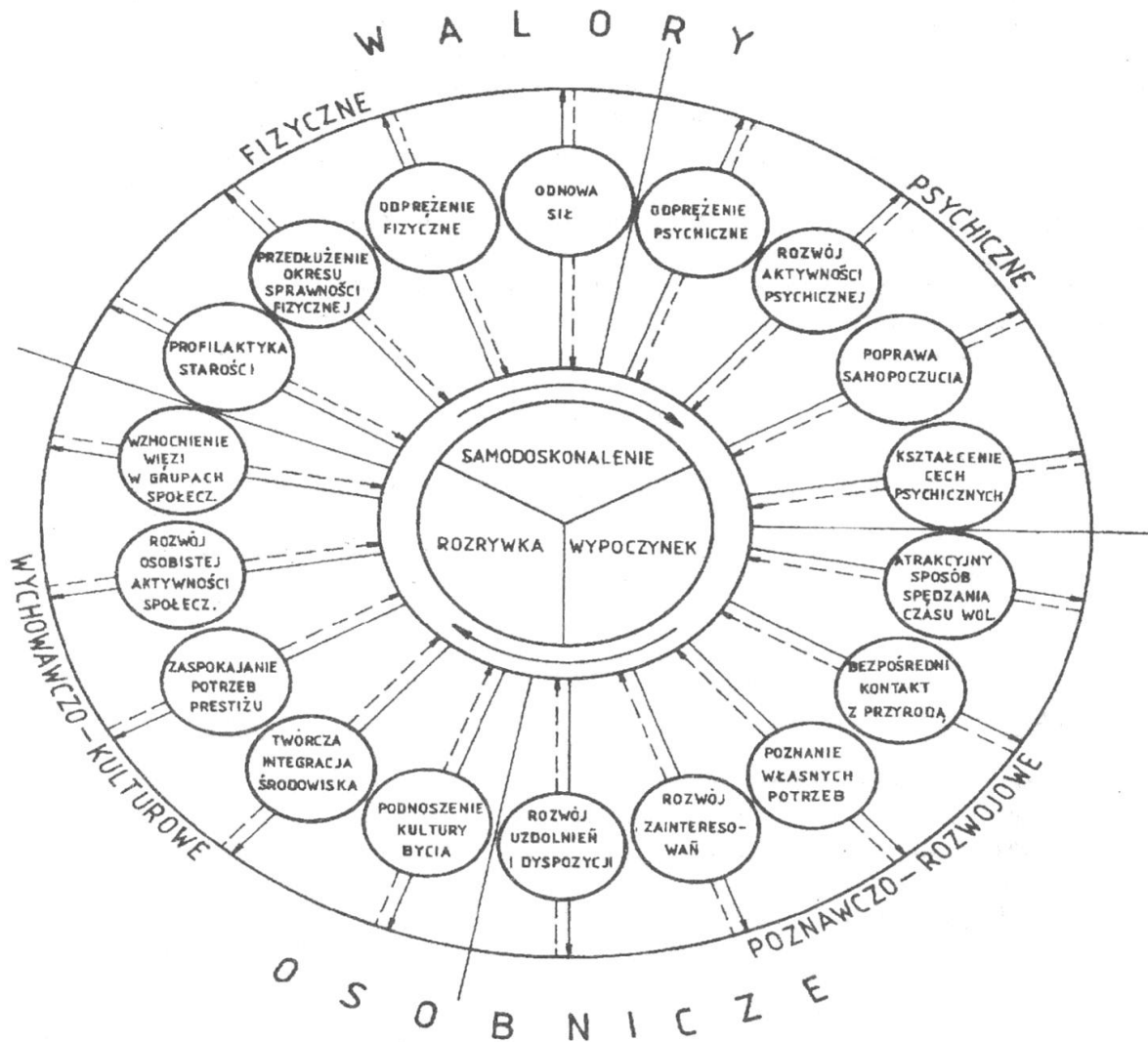


Figure 1. The values of the recreational activity model (according to J. Oździński)

WALORY OSOBNICZE- THE INDIVIDUAL VALUES; WALORY FIZYCZNE – THE PHYSICAL VALUES, PROFILAKTYKA STAROŚCI – THE OLD AGE PREVENTION, PRZEDŁUŻENIE OKRESU SPRAWNOŚCI FIZYCZNEJ – THE EXTENSION OF THE PERIOD OF PHYSICAL FITNESS, ODPREŻENIE FIZYCZNE – THE PHYSICAL RELAXATION, ODNOWA SIŁ – THE RENEWAL OF PHYSICAL STRENGTH; WALORY PSYCHICZNE – THE PSYCHICAL VALUES, ODPREŻENIE PSYCHICZNE- THE PSYCHICAL RENEWAL, ROZWÓJ AKTYWNOŚCI PSYCHICZNEJ – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHICAL ACTIVITY, POPRAWA SAMOPOCZUCIA – THE IMPROVEMENT OF WELL-BEING, KSZTAŁCENIE CECH PSYCHICZNYCH – THE FORMATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES; WALORY WYCHOWAWCZO-KULTUROWE – THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL VALUES, WZMOCNIENIE WIĘZI W GRUPACH SPOŁ. – THE STRENGTHENING OF THE BONDS IN THE SOCIAL GROUPS, ROZWÓJ OSOBISTEJ AKTYWNOŚCI SPOŁ. – THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERSONAL SOCIAL ACTIVITY, ZASPOKAJANIE POTRZEB PRESTIŻU – SATISFYING OF THE NEEDS FOR PRESTIGE, TWÓRCZA INTEGRACJA ŚRODOWISKA – THE CREATIVE INTEGRATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, PODNOSZENIE KULTURY BYCIA – IMPROVING CULTURE OF BEING; WALORY POZNAWCZO- ROZWOJOWE – THE COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL VALUES, ROZWÓJ UZDOLNIEŃ I DYSPOZYCJI – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TALENTS AND PREDISPOSITIONS, ROZWÓJ ZAINTERESOWAŃ – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERESTS, POZNANIE WŁASNYCH POTRZEB – THE RECOGNITION OF ONE’S OWN NEEDS, BEZPOŚREDNI KONTAKT Z PRZYRODĄ- THE DIRECT CONTACT WITH NATURE, ATRAKCYJNY SPOSÓB SPĘDZANIA CZASU WOLNEGO – THE ATTRACTIVE WAY OF SPENDING FREE TIME; SAMODOSKONALENIE – SELF-IMPROVEMENT, LEISURE – WYPOCZYNEK, ENTERTAINMENT – ROZRYWKA.

The main aims of the recreational activity that is playing bridge are the following **self-improvement, leisure and entertainment** (the centre circle in the figure). These aims can be executed in different ways (‘the wheel’ of the aims turns, which is symbolised by the arrows) thanks to the fact that recreational activity has various values including physical, psychical, cognitive-developmental, educational and cultural. If bridge facilitates, for instance the renewal of physical strength, the psychical renewal, the psychical activity, the recognition of one’s own needs, the development of the interests, satisfying of the need for prestige and social activity, then the main aims of the recreational activity are executed through self-improvement, leisure and entertainment. The presented model may be helpful in designing particular classes of learning to play bridge by focusing on the various values during the consecutive classes.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

- 1. The recreational activity has the following values: physical, psychical, cognitive-developmental, educational and cultural, and thanks to them the aims of the recreation can be executed: entertainment, self-improvement, leisure.*

IV. Adult learning

According to D. Kolb, one can look at the process of learning as some kind of cycle in which the key role is **the experience of the individual and its analysis**. This cycle consists of four stages (the left side of the figure below):

1. concrete experience (for instance the trial bidding), in accordance with the views of the learner – the process of education starts from this.
2. thought, reflective observation, when the experience is subject to analysis (the analysis of the bidding).

3. abstract conceptualisation, when the learner continues the analysis of the data and starts to draw conclusions from the experience in which he/she participated (the analysis of the bidding errors, creating the general rules, conclusions for the future).
4. planning and active experimentation starts when the learner changes his/her behaviour and starts to experiment with the new knowledge to test whether the newly elaborated theories are useful in solving the problems and making decisions. The described stages are presented in the figure 2 (the left side of the figure).

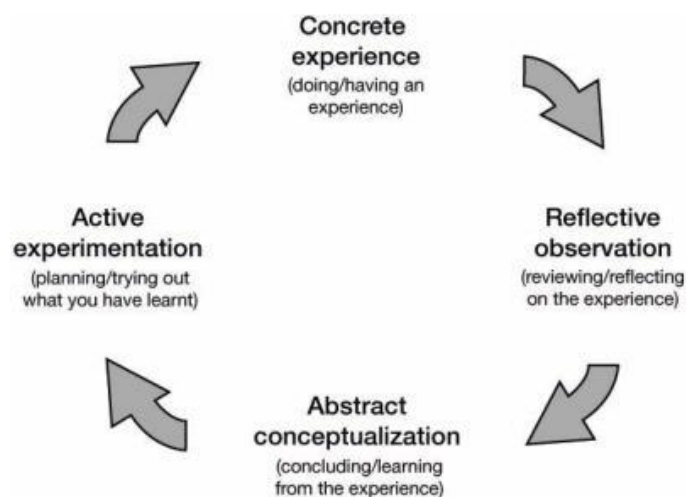


Figure 2. The Kolb's cycle

The bridge learner can generalise the observed regularities to other situations and relate the experience to the broader rules of bridge and theoretical concepts, enabling him/her to better understand them. Thanks to this, the theoretical knowledge is not remote or unfamiliar from their personal experiences. Additionally, each further experience can be an opportunity for the learner to draw conclusions and begin the next cycle of learning. Kolb's concept presents exactly the opposite course of action in relation to the traditional concept. This traditional approach assumes theory first, and then, when the learners are familiar with it, move onto practical exercises (the right side of the figure). Kolb rejects this traditional model.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

1. *The adult learning is a cycle in which the experience of the individual and its analysis is the starting point, plays the key role.*
2. *Each further experience is the occasion for the learner to draw conclusions and begin the next cycle of learning.*

V. Adults' motivation in learning

The key motivation of the adults is the intrinsic motivation. External pressures and praise are less effective. The intrinsic motivation means that the main reasons for the participation in bridge is excitement, joy, fondness of action and the opportunity of presenting and improving of one's skills, in essence, bridge entertains and makes us happy. While the intrinsic motivation manifests in the anticipation of trophies, awards, fame, social advancement, or material profit.

A more detailed approach is the adult learning model by M.S. Knowles. According to this model, the adults have the willingness to trigger higher motivation when they see the possibility of solving life problems in this way, or they perceive the external profits coming from the process of learning. However, this does not mean that the external awards (for example the praise, the victory in the game) have no meaning. On the contrary they constitute the extremely important motivators. Nevertheless, the stronger motivational factor is the satisfying of the internal needs of a given person, such as a desire for achieving greater satisfaction from playing bridge, increasing self-esteem and the quality of life.

The adults' motivation in learning depends on four factors (according to M.S. Knowles):

- **success** – the adults want to achieve success in learning. When the participant is proud of himself/herself, for example because his/her efforts enabled him/her to achieve the success, he/she will take up the next task easily and will show perseverance, probably in the anticipation of experiencing the positive feelings again. If however the learner feels shame in the situation of failure, he/she may be reluctant to the re-involvement in the task situations, in this case the support of the teacher and co-participants will be extremely important. **Important:** the learner, before starting to solve the task, will be looking for answers to the question, whether performing will result in success, and be profitable for him/her.
- **will** – the adults want to influence their learning; the power of will gives a new quality to the motivation and is connected with taking over the responsibility for one's own development. This leads to the bridge learner avoiding the temptations pulling him/her away from the goal; the goal of the training teacher of the adults should be generation of the situation in which the will to deepen knowledge about bridge by the participants will last after the end of the classes. This will triggers metacognitive processes, that is, thinking about thinking. Metacognitive processes are responsible for **the planning** of the cognitive downstream activities, for **the supervision and control** of their performance, and also for **the analysis of feedback and drawing conclusions** from the previous experiences, enabling the solving of given tasks.

- **values** – the adults want to have confidence that they are learning something valuable, the bridge trainer should be able to show the value of the action and the sense of the goal, which the participants will reach during the training.
- **pleasure** – the adults want learning to give pleasure and joy; the joy should be understood as ‘the added value’ of the pleasure, that, which gives the pleasure the quality of joy, the effort is put in reaching the goal; the bigger effort, the bigger joy.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

1. *The key adults’ motivation is the intrinsic motivation. The external punishments and awards are less effective.*
2. *The adults’ motivation to learning is dependent on /1/ the anticipation of the success or the successes that are achieved, /2/ the power of will, /3/ the value of the performed task, /4/ the experienced pleasure and joy in connection to the performance of the task.*

VI. The teacher kindling motivation of the learners model

Knowles proposed the model of the features and skills necessary for the teachers wanting to kindle the motivation of the adult learners. These features and skills were organised into four categories:

- specialist andragogical knowledge (on the adult learning) and methodical (on learning to play bridge): the teacher should realise what is favourable for the adults in the process of learning to play bridge, and also be substantively prepared for the transformation of the knowledge into the instructions concerning the process of learning.
- empathy: the teacher should have a realistic view of the needs and expectations of the adult student; he/she should also be able to adapt the instructions and orders to the level of experience and stage of development of the participant.
- enthusiasm: manifests by the commitment and animation activities performed by the teacher; moreover, he/she should value that what he/she teaches and express his/her commitment through the appropriate degree of emotion, animation and energy during the classes.
- clarity: expressed mainly by the power of language and organisation of the teacher. The majority of the students should be able to understand him/her and follow his/her instructions. The bridge teacher should enable the students to expand their understanding of the contents, if they were not presented enough clearly for the first time.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

1. *In order to stimulate the adult learners' motivation the teacher should:*

- *have the specialist knowledge on the process of the adult learning and the skills to transform the substantive knowledge into the convincing and clear instructions for the learners,*
- *characterised by the ability of empathy,*
- *be the enthusiast of what he/she does,*
- *should have the ability of the clear understanding and explaining of the problems appearing during the process of learning.*

VII. The elements of the process of adult learning

Table 1. The elements of the process of the adult learning (Knowles, M.S., E. F. III Holton and R.A. Swanson, eds. *Edukacja dorosłych [The adult learner]*.) The table summarises the characteristics of the eight elements of the process of education: the student's preparation, climate, planning, diagnosis of the needs, setting of objectives, designing learning plan, methods and techniques, and evaluation. This juxtaposition indicates the differences between the pedagogical process (child and youth learning) and the andragogical process (adult learning).

The element	<i>The child and youth learning</i>	The adult learning
1. Preparing the learner	<i>Minimal</i>	Provision of the essential information, preparation for participation, help in developing realistic expectations, beginning of thinking about the content of the bridge course
2. The climate	<i>Formal, competitive, authority-oriented</i>	Trust, mutual respect, informal, warm relations, collaboration, support, authenticity, care
3. The planning	<i>By the teacher</i>	Mutual planning of the contents of the course by the learner and the teacher
4. Diagnosis of the needs	<i>By the teacher</i>	By mutual (the teacher and the learner) assessment



5. Setting of the objectives	<i>By the teacher</i>	By mutual negotiation
6. Designing the learning plan	<i>The logic of field/subject matter, the creation concentrated fully on the contents</i>	Sequential, depending on the readiness of the adult learner, fully concentrated on the problem
7. The methods and techniques	<i>Concentration on the transmission</i>	Concentration on the inquiry
8. The evaluation	<i>By the teacher</i>	Mutual re-diagnosis of the needs, mutual measurement of the programme

Pay the attention! Memorise!

1. *The adults should know why they need to learn.*
2. *The adults want and need to learn by the experience.*
3. *The adults approach to learning as to the solving of the problems.*
4. *The adults learn the best when the subject matter is the direct value for them.*

VIII. The use of the ICT (*Information and Communication Technology* – modern technologies) in the adult education.

The development of the internet, modern technologies, and social media in particular, facilitates adult education without the presence of a teacher. In addition, the development of technologies and mobile tools assists such an education.

The social learning of the adults can take place with the use of popular websites such as Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter, but also on various educational platforms, vertical portals, and specialised discussion boards. In addition, running or reading blogs has become increasingly popular.

However, in adult learning, one of the most effective solutions turns is **blended learning**. It consists of the linking of the traditional education approach with the use of the modern technologies in the process of education.

Pay the attention! Memorise!

1. *In the adult education, one of the most effective solutions is blended learning, that is linking the traditional education with the use of the modern technologies: The Internet, the social media, the mobile tools.*

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