



DOI: 10.31891/2308-4081/2022-12(1)-2

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, **OLENA TERENKO**
Anton Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University
Address: 87 Romenskaya St., Sumy, 40002, Ukraine
E-mail: eterenko@ukr.net
ORCID 0000-0003-1427-921X

HISTORICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF ADULT EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE USA IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyse historical and pedagogical peculiarities of adult education development in the USA in the early 20th century in the context of reforming educational system of Ukraine. For fulfilment of the mentioned aim the following methods have been applied: a system of general theoretical methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction etc.), and concrete scientific methods, namely term analysis and historical genetic analysis. Functioning of moonlight schools has been depicted. Determinants of the development of adult education in this period, in particular, such historical events as World Wars, the period of prosperity, the Great Depression and socio-economic factors have been singled out. The influence of industrialization and the introduction of new agricultural technologies on adult education has been presented. Legislative basics of adult education have been singled out, namely: Smith-Hughes Act (1917), which was aimed at vocational training at schools and colleges; George-Reed Act (1929), which emphasized the training of specialists in the field of home economics and agriculture; George-Deen Act of Vocational Education (1935), which provided additional funding for programs in agriculture, home economics, and industry; George-Barden Act (1946), which was flexible in the distribution of funding for education, provided money for teacher training; Bill of Rights (1944), called the Soldiers' Bill of Rights because it dealt with loans for education and housing for demobilized soldiers; Employment Act (1946). Results of the conducted research work give opportunity to state that American experience in the field of adult education can help to create harmony between national traditions and world achievements on the basis of humanism and democracy; to give high quality educational service to adults, synchronize national system of adult education with world tendencies, provide conditions for adult education development and its influence on economic development of state.

Keywords: adult education, USA, American Association of Adult Education, world war, moonlight schools.

ІСТОРИЧНІ ТА ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РОЗВИТКУ ОСВІТИ ДОРΟΣЛИХ У США НА ПОЧАТКУ ХХ СТОЛІТТЯ

АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою статті є аналіз історичних і педагогічних особливостей розвитку освіти дорослих у США у першій половині ХХ століття у контексті реформування



української освітньої системи. Для реалізації визначеної мети використано такі методи: система загальнотеоретичних методів, а саме аналіз, синтез, абстрагування, порівняння, та конкретно наукові методи, а саме термінологічний аналіз та історико-генетичний аналіз. Описано функціонування шкіл місячного світла. Виділено детермінанти розвитку освіти дорослих у означений період, а саме історичні події: світові війни, епоха процвітання, велика депресія та соціально-економічні фактори. Продемонстровано вплив індустріалізації та новітніх сільськогосподарських технологій на систему освіти дорослих. Виділено законодавчі засади освіти дорослих: Закон Сміта–Хагса (1917), який був націлений на професійно-технічну підготовку у школах та коледжах, Закон Джорджа–Ріда (1929), у якому акцентувалася увага на підготовці фахівців з економіки та сільського господарства, Закон Джорджа–Діна про професійну освіту (1935), у якому передбачалося додаткове фінансування програм з сільського господарства та економіки, Закон Джорджа–Бадена (1946), у якому акцентувалася увага на гнучкості фінансування освіти дорослих та забезпечувалося фінансування підготовки учителів, Біль про права, згідно з яким надавалася фінансова допомога солдатам на отримання освітніх послуг. Виокремлено тенденції розвитку освіти дорослих у США на початку XX століття (визнання та затвердження терміну «освіта дорослих»; публікація ґрунтовних праць з питань освіти дорослих; усвідомлення громадськістю ролі та значення освіти дорослих; домінування неформальної освіти дорослих; початок створення законодавчої бази для освіти дорослих; пріоритет загальнокультурних, соціальних цілей освіти; усвідомлення необхідності боротьби з неписьменністю; розширення мережі навчальних закладів тощо). Результати проведеного дослідження дають підстави стверджувати, що американський досвід у сфері освіти дорослих може слугувати джерелом гармонізації між національними традиціями та світовими надбаннями на засадах гуманізму та демократії, синхронізувати національну систему освіти дорослих зі світовими тенденціями, забезпечити умови для розвитку освіти дорослих та її вплив на рівень економічного розвитку у держави.

Ключові слова: освіта дорослих, США, Американська асоціація освіти дорослих, Світова війна, школи місячного світла.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and integration have necessitated introduction of lifelong learning concept, according to which adult education is an important factor in social development and training of highly qualified professionals. The application of American experience in the field of adult education is important for Ukrainian pedagogical science, as our country seeks to improve education system in accordance with international standards and is considered a democratic European country. Adult education is not only a tool for self-improvement and self-development, but also a means of forming civil society, as it contributes to the formation of active citizens.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the article is to analyse historical and pedagogical peculiarities of adult education development in the USA in the early 20th century in the context of reforming educational system of Ukraine.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

Ukrainian comparativists such as N. Bidyuk, I. Litovchenko, L. Lukyanova, O. Ogienko, N. Terekhina and foreign researchers such as W. Cook and M. Knowles



studied peculiarities of the American education system functioning. Historical peculiarities of adult education were studied by A. Rose and T. Lidell.

To achieve the goal, we used a number of general theoretical methods, namely analysis, synthesis, abstraction, comparison and generalization, which allow to clarify the state of problem development, to form the starting points and conclusions; specifically scientific methods, namely, terminological analysis, which allows to clarify the definition, reveals the essence of basic concepts, historical and genetic analysis, which allow to trace the genesis of adult education, the method of scientific extrapolation, which allows to develop recommendations for creative usage of American and Canadian experience in Ukrainian education.

RESULTS

Development of adult education in the USA in early 20th century was due, on the one hand, to the rapid intensification of industry and agriculture, and on the other hand due to the large influx of immigrants. For example, in 1900 there were more than 400 industrial trusts in the USA, the country became a leader in technical equipment, as well as a leader in the production of meat, grain and cotton. The country's population reached 96 million, of which 49 million were immigrants, which is 55 million more than in 1870.

Immigration and urbanization have brought new challenges, stimulating the need for adult education as a resource for resettlement and acculturation. At the same time, industrialization and the introduction of new agricultural technologies required a large number of educated skilled workers that also highlighted the need to develop adult education in the early 20th century.

Along with libraries, museums, fairs and exhibitions, the university movement of knowledge dissemination played a special role in raising the educational level of adult population. Its mission was to enable the general public to listen to lectures at the university. Some universities conducted short-term courses, opened farmers' institutes, and summer schools for teachers.

At the end of World War I, the Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act (1914), that provided funding for agricultural colleges, as well as for the establishment of university knowledge networks to provide knowledge about innovation in agriculture, home economics, politics, leadership, etc. (Liddell, 2014). This contributed to the dissemination and support of the dissemination of knowledge by federal, state and local universities. In the 1930s, not only universities but also colleges offered evening courses for their communities and held discussion groups.

The fight against illiteracy is a red line through the development of adult education in the United States, but it has not been systematic. According to T. Cook (1977), the official beginning of the fight against illiteracy can be considered the launch of the illiteracy program, which was opened in 1911 by Cora Wilson Stewart in Kentucky. It was aimed at opening the Moonlight schools. Schools operated only at moonlight nights so that people could easily find their way to school. Volunteer teachers from day schools for children worked at schools. C. Stewart was convinced that adults should not use the same materials as children to learn to read, so she developed a newspaper for adult students with short sentences and lots of repetitions. In teaching writing, she focused on teaching adults to write their own names, believing that it was an effective way to develop what we would now call self-esteem. The success of the moonlight schools contributed to their spread, and in 1914, the governor set up an illiteracy commission, the first in the United States of America (Cook, 1977).



K. Stewart continued to work. After her emotional and thorough presentation at the National Association of Education conference, she was invited to chair the Illiteracy committee, which was interested in the americanization of immigrants and the literacy of illiterate indigenous people. From 1916 to 1926, C. Stewart organized numerous illiteracy activities, led a crusade in Kentucky to eradicate illiteracy, wrote the First Soldier's Book for World War I recruits, and headed the Illiteracy Eradication Section of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, initiated the National Crusade of Illiteracy in 1926 (Nelms, 1997).

The events that affected all spheres of American society were the First (1914–1918) and Second (1939–1945) World Wars and the Great Depression (1929–1933). Adult education was not left out, as it had the potential to respond to challenges in times of crisis.

The First World War hardly affected the United States of America. Its human losses were much smaller than in other countries. And, according to historians, the war contributed to increased investment in industry, reducing the unemployment rate. In 1920, the country became the leader in many positions in the world (Zinn, 2015).

In 1920s, the demand for adult training and personal development grew. This has led to the widespread usage of school facilities, attracting local budgets for adult education. Emily Griffith School of opportunity was opened in Denver, Colorado, offering training for all who wanted to study; Frank Manley's school, which was opened during non-business hours and offered both educational and entertainment programs. The school has become an example of the implementation of the community education model. Adult education centers were opened with educational programs for the vulnerable strata of life: unemployed, immigrants, indigenous peoples, African-American and Latin American minorities, and others, and associations were formed, including the Association of Correspondence Courses (1915).

The rapid development of industry has become a prerequisite for the emergence of corporate adult learning. Although apprenticeships and mentoring remained the basis of professional training, large corporations (Westinghouse Electric, Ford, and General Motors) began to develop in-house courses to develop the professional skills of their employees to meet the requirements and needs of the corporation. Certified courses and programs appeared at the same time. Particular attention was paid to military training.

A significant impetus for the development of adult education was the development of the first standardized intelligence tests for literate, illiterate and non-English-speaking soldiers, sponsored by the American army. Their findings are an objective confirmation that a large number of both Native Americans and immigrants need literacy, language, and Americanization assistance. In response, the government passed Immigrants Act (1917), which prohibited people over the age of 16 who could not read enter the country (Cook, 1977); created “development battalions” for literacy training, in which 5,000 illiterate and non-English-speaking servicemen were trained in 1919 (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994); launched programs for immigrant education, which were offered both in evening and public schools; created the Department of Education for Immigrants (1920) that in 1924 was renamed the Department of Adult Education, as it began to deal with adult education in general (Knowles, 1977).

The development of adult education took place quite intensively during the “era of prosperity”, which lasted 10 years (until 1929) and was characterized by economic growth, improving human welfare and reducing unemployment, migration and urbanization, democratic civic society.

According to our study, adult education movement (Knowles, 1983) covered business and industry, colleges and universities, consulting services, government agencies, social services, centers, unions, libraries, media, museums, private and public schools,



religious institutions and public organizations, associations, etc. This shows that adult education played a significant role in the life of American society and was seen as a tool for adapting and renewing public life. Adult education was especially supported by educational, civic organizations and various associations. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, established in 1911, played a key role in the development of adult education in the United States of America. In 1918, experts from one section of the foundation, the section for the culturing of immigrants in American society, conducted a study devoted to the possibilities of adult education in the americanization and assimilation of immigrants. After receiving positive research results, the foundation in the 1920s began funding adult education projects and participated in the formation of educational policy in this field of education, and in 1924 initiated the American Association of Adult Education, headed by Morse Cartwright.

American Association of Adult Education has paid special attention to the development of libraries as an educational institution, a provider of adult education. It initiated and provided financial support for the Targeted Reading project, one of the forms of which was the creation of discussion groups which reflected the needs of both the individual and the community; actively cooperated with teachers for adults, conducted research, implemented projects in the field of adult education, launched a journal of adult education, contributed to the official recognition of the term “adult education”. With its support, the first Department of Adult Education was opened at Columbia University in 1930, which began training teachers for adults.

The American Association of Adult Education actively supported the establishment of public high schools, which were based on the ideas of the Danish philosopher and historian N. Grundtvig about education as “spreading light”, as “awakening to life”, as “enlightenment for life” based on life experience, study of history, epic, language; freedom as the basis of human life, its interaction with others, based on respect, mutual understanding; the living word as a means of knowing oneself, one’s national uniqueness, national spirit, spirituality; belief in the natural talent of people, man as a source of enlightenment. N. Grundtvig believed that the high public school should be a school for life, a light for the people (Kulish, 1984; Ogienko, 2008).

Such schools appeared in the United States of America in 1920s and 1930s. The most famous were the John C. Campbell folk school (1925), the Poconos People's college in Pennsylvania (1924), the Waddington People's college in West Virginia (1927) and the Highlander school in Tennessee; Boston center for adult education (1933), which mission was to support democracy; J. Studebecker's Forum (1935), which focused its activities on forming an active position of community members. For example, the J. Campbell folk school offered classes in art, music, dance, cooking, traditional crafts, and more. The main mission of the school was to gain adult experience of non-formal learning and community life through joyful and lively communication. The Campbell public school will soon celebrate its 100th anniversary. Today, the school holds more than 800 classes that can be attended every day or only on Sundays. It is an adult school that provides accommodation and food. Singing folk songs is a must. Six thousand students of all ages come each year to find the same “bright, creative force”, live communication, experience (O’Keefe, 1986).

Analysis of public schools shows that a significant percentage of its students are marginalized and, therefore, through language and civic literacy, they are involved in community life, feel their opportunities to participate in building democratic society.

Of particular interest is Highlander folk school. Its founder Miles Horton went to Denmark to learn the experience of public schools. This gave him opportunity to



understand their peculiarities, determine the purpose and objectives of future Highlander school. The main purpose of its work was to motivate adults to learn, develop skills and desire to learn, the desire for self-development, self-improvement and awareness of opportunities to solve their own problems and communities. The school offered several programs: "Cooperation", which was aimed at developing skills of interaction, cooperation, and provided permanent residence of students for six months; "Resolution of social conflicts", which was practice-oriented; "Life in the community", which was aimed at discussing and solving community problems, political and economic issues, leisure. Today, Highlander continues to work to promote social justice.

During Great Depression, the government initiated creation of new organizations, passed laws, launched projects and programs aimed at improving educational and professional level of the unemployed and their employment, including: Federal Emergency Relief Act, which emphasized adult education; New Deal program, which was aimed at employing adult teachers; the project "Work", which was aimed at the problems of literacy and citizenship, as well as education at the college level; National Department of Youth Affairs, which provided an opportunity to acquire professional skills and abilities of unemployed youth; Civil Corps, which promoted on-the-job training and employment; Student Bureau, which provided an opportunity to master the working professions; opening of information and counseling agencies that provided information on available courses and programs for adults; creation of the Association of Evening Colleges.

In the early 20th century, the Congress passed a number of laws, which, in our opinion, were the basis for creation of legislative support for adult education. They include: Smith-Hughes Act (1917), which was aimed at vocational training at schools and colleges; George-Reed Act (1929), which emphasized the training of specialists in the field of home economics and agriculture; George-Deen Act of Vocational Education (1935), which provided additional funding for programs in agriculture, home economics, and industry; George-Barden Act (1946), which was flexible in the distribution of funding for education, provided money for teacher training; Bill of Rights (1944), called the Soldiers' Bill of Rights because it dealt with loans for education and housing for demobilized soldiers; Employment Act (1946).

During World War II, as in World War I, it was found out that hundreds of thousands of American adults were uneducated and functionally illiterate, that is, their literacy skills were lower than those of a fifth-grader (Cook, 1977). Poorly educated, functionally illiterate adults, according to General D. Eisenhower, commander of the Allied forces during the war, pose a threat not only to national security and economic development in general, but also were a waste of human talent. Therefore, after retiring from the army and taking over the presidency at Columbia University, he launched the Human Resources Conservation Project, which was aimed at developing and preserving the nation's human resources. To support adult education in the 1940s, the "adaptation to life" movement became widespread, offering educational programs and courses for adults without secondary education. At the same time, Tests of general educational development (GED) were worked out to enable servicemen who interrupted their training and went to the front to obtain a certificate of secondary education (Rose, 1990).

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, the early twentieth century was a very difficult period in the life of American society. Determinants of the development of adult education in this period were definite historical events, such as: World Wars (1914–1918; 1939–1945), the period of prosperity (1922–1929) – stabilization and prosperity, the Great Depression (1929–1933);



socio-economic factors: along with the rapid growth of economy, the development of private business, the emergence of new industries and its renewal, the economic and social crisis of the Great Depression, Roosevelt's program "New Deal"; urbanization, immigration; socio-cultural factors: population migration, acculturation and Americanization, involvement of citizens in solving community problems, civic education, etc.

Trends in the development of adult education in the United States of America in the early 20th century are the following: recognition and approval of the term "adult education"; release of thorough works on adult education; public awareness of the role and importance of adult education; the dominance of non-formal adult education; the beginning of the creation of a legislative framework for adult education; the beginning of teacher training for adults at the university; the emergence of in-house training; dissemination of movements "People's School", "Women's Movement"; priority of general cultural, social goals of adult education with emphasis on community education, education for democracy, education for Americanization and acculturation; low level of adult literacy; awareness of the need to combat illiteracy; expanding the network of educational institutions.

The results of the conducted research show that American experience in adult education will harmonize national traditions and world heritage on the basis of humanism and democracy, provide high quality educational services for adults, synchronize domestic adult education system with global trends, provide effective education.

We consider conducting comparative and pedagogical research on the problem of recognizing the results of non-formal adult education in foreign countries as prospects for further research.

REFERENCES

1. Cook, W. D. (1977). *Adult literacy education in the United States*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
2. Knowles, M. S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: andragogy versus pedagogy*. New York: Association Press.
3. Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-directed learning: a guide for learners and teachers*. New York; Toronto: Cambridge Adult Education Company.
4. Knowles, M. S. (1977). *A history of the adult education movement in the United States*. Melbourne, FL: Krieger.
5. Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall/Cambridge.
6. Knowles, M. S. (1985). *Andragogy in Action: Applying Modern Principles of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
7. Knowles, M. S. (1990). *The adult learner: a neglected species* (4th ed.). Houston, London, Paris, Zurich, Tokyo: Gulf Publishing Company.
8. Knowles, M. S. (1995). *Designs for adult learning: practical resources, exercises, and course outlines from the father of adult learning*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
9. Knowles, M. S., Holton, III E.E., & Swanson, R. A. (2011). *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (7th ed.). London; New York, etc.: ELSEVIER Butterworth-Heinemann.
10. Knowles, M. S., & Johnson, E. I. (1995). *Adult education in the United States. Encyclopedia Americana – International edition: in 30 volumes* (Vol.1, pp. 185–190). Danbury, Connecticut: Grolier Incorporated.



11. Liddell, T. (2014). Historical Evolution of Adult Education in America: The Impact of Institutions, Change, and Acculturation. In Management Association, I. (Eds.), *Adult and Continuing Education: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, 1–15. IGI Global. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-5780-9.ch001>
12. O'Keefe, L. (1992). *Growing is the Reason for Being: An Experiment in Education at the John C. Campbell Folk School*.
13. Rose, A. D. (1990). Preparing for veterans: Higher education and the efforts to accredit the learning of World War II servicemen and women. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 42, 30–45.
14. Rose, A. D. (1991). *Ends or means: An overview of the history of the Adult Education Act*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.
15. Rose, A. D. (1999). Adult Education as a Means, not an End: United States Policy in the Twentieth Century. *Adult Learning*, 10(3), 4–6.
16. Stewart, D.W. (1987). *Adult Learning in America: Eduard Lindeman and his agenda for lifelong education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, Inc.
17. Stubblefield, H. W. (1981). The idea of lifelong learning in the Chautauqua movement. *Adult Education*, 31, 198–208
18. Stubblefield, H. W. (1988). *Towards a history of adult education in America: the search for a unifying principle*. London: Croom Helm.
19. Stubblefield, H. W., & Keane, P. (1994). *Adult education in the American experience: From the colonial period to the present*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.