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Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate professor, **OLENA TERENCEK**  
Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A.S.Makarenko, Ukraine

E-mail: [eterenko@ukr.net](mailto:eterenko@ukr.net)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-921X>

### CONCEPTUAL IDEAS AND GUIDELINES OF NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF ADULT EDUCATION

#### ABSTRACT

*The article deals with conceptual ideas and guidelines of North American model of adult education. It is substantiated that North American model of adult education is based on the philosophical principles of liberalism, progressivism, behaviorism, humanism, radicalism, and constructivism. Liberalism has ancient roots and is based on the position that since the person is the real source of progress in society, it is necessary to ensure his/her rights and freedoms, providing equal access to education regardless of social status and well-being. The basic principle of liberal education is singled out, which is to develop a personality that meets the purpose of liberal education in ancient times – provision of education for citizens who can become active participants of a democratic society. It is proven that non-formal adult education should be continuous, focus on the development of intellectual abilities, be accessible to all layers of the population, and its content must meet their needs. It is found out that the historical roots of the philosophy of progressivism are associated with progressive political movement in society and education. Its basis is the concept of interaction between education and society, empirical theory of democratization of education. It is determined that behavioral philosophy, founded by John Watson, appeared in the USA in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the theory of Pavlov's conditioned reflexes, its supporters (J. Watson, B. Sninner and E. Thorndike) considered personality as a set of behavioral responses to stimuli of the environment. It is identified that the purpose of adult education is the modification of a person's behavior. It is proven that unlike behaviorists, representatives of humanistic philosophy (J. Brown, A. Maslow, M. Knowles, K. Rogers, etc.) considered a man to be independent, active, open to change and self-actualization. It is stressed that the founders of the radical trend, based on theories of anarchism, marxism, and socialism, considered education in general and adult education, in particular, as an important mechanism to achieve radical changes in society. Meanwhile, the social role of non-formal adult education was updated, because it required critical thinking and personal participation in these changes.*

**Keywords:** *the USA, adult education, liberalism, behaviorism, humanism, models of education.*

### КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНІ ІДЕЇ ТА ОРІЄНТИРИ ПІВНІЧНОАМЕРИКАНСЬКОЇ МОДЕЛІ ОСВІТИ ДОРΟΣЛИХ

#### АНОТАЦІЯ

*У статті розкриваються концептуальні ідеї та орієнтири північноамериканської моделі освіти дорослих. Доведено, що північноамериканська модель освіти дорослих функціонує на засадах лібералізму, прогресивізму, біхевіоризму, гуманізму, радикалізму,*



конструктивізму. Лібералізм має античні корені та передбачає, що людина є основним джерелом прогресу у суспільстві. Відповідно, важливим є забезпечення права кожної людини на отримання доступу до освітніх послуг незалежно від соціального статусу. Виокремлено основні принципи ліберальної освіти, а саме розвиток особистості відповідно до цілей ліберальної освіти античних часів – освіта громадян, які здатні бути активними учасниками демократичного суспільства. Доведено, що неформальна освіта дорослих має бути сфокусована на розвитку інтелектуальних здібностей, має бути доступною для всіх верств населення, а зміст освіти має відповідати освітнім потребам здобувачів освіти. З'ясовано, що історичні корені філософії прогресивізму пов'язані з прогресивним політичним рухом у суспільстві та освітою. Прогресивізм базується на взаємодії між освітою та суспільством та емпіричною теорією демократизації освіти. Доведено, що біхевіоризм, засновником якого є Джон Вотсон, з'явився у США на початку ХХ століття. Підтримуючи теорію Павлова про рефлексі, його послідовники – Дж. Вотсон, Б.Скінер, Е. Торндайк – досліджували особистість як сукупність поведінкових реакцій на стимули з оточуючого середовища. Визначено, що ціллю освіти дорослих є модифікація поведінки особистості. Доведено, що на противагу біхевіоризму, представники гуманізму (Дж. Браун, М. Ноулз, К. Роджерс) вважали людину незалежною, активною, відкритою до змін та самоактуалізації. Акцентовано увагу, що прихильники радикалізму, який базується на анархізмі та марксизмі, дотримувались думки, що освіта, а особливо освіта дорослих, є важливим механізмом досягнення радикальних змін у суспільстві. Визначено соціальну роль неформальної освіти дорослих.

**Ключові слова:** США, освіта дорослих, лібералізм, біхевіоризм, гуманізм, моделі освіти.

## INTRODUCTION

The dynamism of world economic and social development, the processes of globalization and integration, the transition to an information society necessitate upgrading of the education system, which is the methodological basis of the concept of “lifelong learning” that is regarded as essential and mandatory component of the social model of modern society. Thus, it is able to adequately respond to the challenges of modern society and provide professional human and social development throughout life. Adult education is one of the most important components of lifelong education.

The main factors of intensive development of adult education are social and economic changes taking place in society. According to S. Merriam, socio-cultural context combines three dimensions: demographics, globalization of economy and technology, creating special interests and needs of the adult person, and educational opportunities available to them (Merriam, 2013).

Statistical data show that in developed countries there is a trend of population ageing. In 2014, the number of the elderly increased to 12 % compared to 9 % in 1994 and by 2050 is expected to increase to 21 %. In Sinai, the number of people after 65 years is 16.5 %. However, modern adults appear to have more free time thanks to the latest technology. Therefore, US researchers stress the need to create inclusive education model that takes into account the needs of adults of all ages (Bruner, 2014).

The global economy is regarded by researchers as a megatrend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that “has dramatic implications for adult education.” This is due to a mismatch of knowledge and competence, a necessity to adequately use professional retraining, the



transition to an economy in the service sector, changes in the labor force, the transition to an information society, the achievements of scientific and technological progress, and the emergence of new technologies.

Response of adult education in the sociocultural context of modern society is the integration and interpenetration of formal and informal education, which serves as a basis for building a society that learns.

Continuous education is understood today not only as a lifelong learning, but also as a “lifewide” learning, focusing on expanding the possibilities of education by means of both formal and informal education. In this context, non-formal adult education is considered a component of adult education as important as a social and cultural component that reflects the needs of adults in obtaining a variety of educational services. Therefore, the development of theoretical foundations for formal education is an important pedagogical understanding of formal education as a component of adult education.

#### **THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of our research is to analyse conceptual ideas of North American model of adult education.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS**

A number of American scientists studied the problem of philosophical basis of adult education in the United States, namely: J. Alice, T. Brameld (1981), J. Bruner (2000), G. Darkenvald (1991), J. Dewey (1922), M. Knowles (1990), A. Maslow (1970), S. Merriam (2013) and others.

J. S. Merriam (2013) analyzed philosophical approaches that influenced the development of adult education (liberalism, progressivism, behaviorism, humanism, and radicalism constructivism).

To fulfill the aim of our research we applied the methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, analogy, comparative historical method, genetic method, problem-chronological method.

#### **RESULTS**

Structural and logical analysis of research on adult education allowed to determine its multidisciplinary nature and identify key aspects of research: philosophical, historical and pedagogical, psychological, social, educational, and andragogical.

Liberalism has ancient roots and states that since the person is the real source of progress in society, it is necessary to ensure their rights and freedoms, providing equal access to education regardless of social status and well-being. The basic principle of liberal education is to develop a personality that meets the purpose of liberal education in ancient times – the education of citizens who can become active participants in a democratic society. Hence, non-formal adult education should be continuous, focus on the development of intellectual abilities, be accessible to all sections of the population, and its content must meet their needs (Raiskums, 2023).

The historical roots of the philosophy of progressivism is associated with progressive political movement in society and education. Its basis is the concept of interaction between education and society, empirical theory of education democratization. Since the intensive development of adult education takes place during progressivism heyday in the USA, it is not surprising that it had a significant influence. Among the supporters of progressivism in adult education are E. Lindemann and B. Berhevin, who stated that the purpose of adult education is to meet the educational needs of adults and insisted that adult education should be practice-oriented and based on the experience of



adults. He also stated that the teacher is not a “sage”, as in the liberal tradition, but a “guide” that helps adults organize, encourage, implement and evaluate complex learning (Bergevin, 1997; Dewey, 1922).

Prominent supporters of these concepts in pedagogy are S. Cohen, W. Feinberg, L. Fischer, L. Metcalf, D. Oliver, G. Shane, R. Sherman B. Sobel, W. Stanley, G. Wheeler, R. Wright, and others. These concepts are directly related to non-formal education. According to the concept of social reconstructivism, informal adult education may be a mechanism that causes the corresponding “reconstruction” of society.

The main purpose of the concept of “education for survival”, which was developed by researchers J. Jones, D. Kaufman, D. Mann, and F. Newman, was training for survival in conflicts and wars. The result of its implementation in informal adult education was the creation of educational programs on problems of suicide, drug abuse, alcoholism, etc (Mann, 1997).

M. Knowles paid special attention to the impact of adult community on the community itself. Therefore, the concept of “public education” or “community education” occupies an appropriate place in informal adult education of the USA. Its founders – L. Decker, M. King, F. Keppel, K. Kraus, R. Saalen and others – tried to improve the society, solve community problems and form a civil democratic society.

Behavioral philosophy, founded by John Watson, appeared in the USA in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the theory of Pavlov’s conditioned reflexes, its supporters (J. Watson, B. Sninner E. Thorndike) considered personality as a set of behavioral responses to stimuli of the environment. Hence the purpose of adult education is to modify the behavior of adults.

Unlike behaviorists, representatives of humanistic philosophy (J. Brown, M. Knowles, A. Maslow, K. Rogers, etc.) considered a person to be independent, active, open to changes and self-actualization. A. Maslow has identified the main characteristics of a person that include: skilful perception of reality, of oneself, others and the environment; spontaneity; sensitivity to problems of others; a constant desire to evaluate actions; compassion; search of interpersonal relations; respect; ethical quality; friendly sense of humor; creativity; striving for self-actualization; openness to new experience (Knowles, 1990). Revealing the inner potential of a person is one of the main tasks of humanist teachers.

According to K. James, andragogics as the science of adult education, the main provisions of which were founded by the American scientist M. Knowles, is a model of humanistic approach to adult education, based on specific characteristics of an adult as a subject of educational process, namely: awareness of oneself as an independent individual; availability of life and professional experience, which becomes a source of education directly to a person and their colleagues; availability of educational needs; aspiration through training to solve vital problems and achieve specific goals; the desire for self-education and self-development; desire for immediate implementation of acquired knowledge (Lindeman, 1989).

The founders of the radical philosophy, based on theories of anarchism, marxism, and socialism, consider education in general and adult education in particular as an important mechanism to achieve radical changes in society. It updates social role of non-formal adult education, because it requires critical thinking and personal participation in these changes (Rogers, 2022). A vivid representative of this philosophical direction is Paulo Freire, who believed that a radical transformation of society should involve wider sections



of the population into education. In his works, “Education as the Practice of Freedom” and “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, he argued that the “banking model” of adult education is never offered to those who are studying the possibility of critical consideration of reality. P. Freire considered the model “of problem solving” that is regarded as a humanistic and liberating practice, which states that “...the oppressed person has to fight for his/her release,” and “the world is no longer something that should be described as misleading, as they become the objects of converting human actions,” as an alternative to “banking” model of education. P. Freire invites people to explore and change society through acquisition of education (Knowles, 1977).

According to philosophy of constructivism, a person is unique in their vision of the world, beliefs, and outlook because they are able to construct their personal understanding of reality. Teachers are not just transmitters of knowledge; they serve as consultants, moderators, and facilitators.

Scientists are convinced that the “philosophy of adult education is the foundation of educational practice”, the structure that is able to combine individual components of adult education into a whole, identify the relationship of quantitative and qualitative changes (Knowles, 1977).

Although most of the ideas of the 20th century in American educational philosophy were borrowed from large systems or schools of philosophy, pedagogical ideas of I. Herbart, J. Locke, J. Pestalozzi, F. Froebel, H. Spencer, pedagogical theories of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of market demands, there has been formed a unique philosophy of pragmatism, along with behaviorism and social constructivism, a typical American one that outlined all further development of philosophy of education in the USA.

The analysis of scientific literature showed that adult education in the USA has evolved with the development of society and has a long history and traditions. It is mainly regarded as informal adult education aimed at self-improvement of adults to meet their educational needs, as a mechanism of civil society formation (Brameld, 1981).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there began an active consideration concerning educational experience and its justification. The idea of non-formal adult education is justified in scientific studies of French philosopher J. Condorcet. He emphasized the importance and necessity of teaching people till old age, using lectures, libraries, museums, etc. To implement his ideas in practice he opened the first night school for adults “New Institute for the formation of the human character.” In his autobiographical work “Going my way,” he proves the importance of education for adults, reveals the essential features of their training and carefully describes difficulties in organizing schools for adults (Condorcet, 1936).

Development of adult education in the United States and European countries was under significant impact of philosophical teaching of N. Hruntdviih (1783-1872), especially under his conception of the Supreme People’s school. The scientist considered adult education as “waking life”, “spread of the light”, “effect on the soul”. He wrote about higher public school and said that it “should be a school for life ... must be historic and poetic ... should be a light to the people ... should be boarding school for adults” (Bruner, 2014).

The beginning of formal education conceptualization is linked with an international conference in Williamsburg (USA, 1967) when the world crisis in education was considered. F. Coombs warned that there was a “global crisis of education, and although it is not so tangible as food or military crisis, it can have serious consequences” (Darkenwald, 1991). He identified the factors of global crisis: a large number of those who wish to learn; lack of training facilities; conservative education system; social inertia, indifference to the needs and problems of education (Werner, 2023).



So, the idea of adult education, which was considered in the context of lifelong education, was defined as a means of solving the problem of “infinite in the finite”, of achieving the fullness of human development”, as a principle of constant updating of knowledge, because “life is constantly moving, requires full and comprehensive development of human capabilities”, and this requires education in which “an important task of the teacher is “to develop in students the ability and desire to learn life” and the result of education is “the need to study in school, but much more important is to study after high school, and this studying has more profound consequences, its impact on a person and society is immeasurably more important” (Freier, 1987).

In the context of scientific understanding of the problems of adult education there is a significant psychological science research, revealing the specific psychology of adult learning: characteristics of an adult as a subject of study (E. Thorndike, E. Erickson), the motivation of adult learning (P. Jarvis, A. Mitin, A. Rogers) and others.

The first publications in which the ability, desire and interest in adult learning were substantiated were works by E. Thorndike “Adult learning”, “Interests of adults” and the work of G. Sorenson “Ability of adults”. A psychologist H. Gardner presented the main provisions for the theory of multiple intelligences. He singled out verbal, visual, logical-mathematical, internally personal, musical and naturalistic intelligences which are developed throughout life (Stock, 2023).

B. Nyuharten substantiated the impact of socio-economic factors on human development and human presence in the so-called “social clock” by which a person feels the need for some changes in life, including training needs.

In this context, of vital importance are studies by American scientists A. Maslow and K. Rogers who considered learning not as a “response to a stimulus or the demands of new knowledge”, but as a process of internal satisfaction of “motives and impulses” (Maslow, 1970).

“Needs” are defined as entities, which are characterized by dissatisfaction with the requirements of life and should be overcome; as the absence of a benefit; a need in anything that a person is going through and understands.

P. Jarvis states that the need for knowledge is inherent in every person, and the fear of internal knowledge is not something that is inborn, but a result of negative social experience. Without the need for knowledge a person can not understand the world in which they live and cannot adjust to it. Therefore, its taxonomy (scientist believe that the basic needs are appropriately considered as taxonomy) needs knowledge that plays an important role (Jarvis, 2004).

We agree with P. Jarvis considerations on the importance of the need of knowledge, because it is a key feature of adult education system, especially when it comes to informal adult education. Therefore, the presence of such a need and desire to satisfy it motivates adults’ independent and voluntary training. Motivation is considered as a specific emotional state that encourages action to meet specific needs.

Scientific exploration shows that the problem of motivation for adult learning is of special importance. We agree with A. Rogers’ identification of three fundamental ideas for motivating adult participation in education: internal motivation to meet diverse needs; motivation that can be formed; motivation that is related to the objectives formulated and accepted by a person (Council for Cultural Cooperation, 2000).

K. Hawley argues that motivation of adult learning has a different semantic focus: focus on the goal, focus on the process, and focus on the subject.



P. Burgess classified motivational orientations of adults as follows: knowledge; achieving personal, social and religious purposes; taking part in social activities; meeting formal requirements.

### CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

North American model of adult education is based on philosophical ideas of liberalism, progressivism, behaviorism, humanism, radicalism, and constructivism. Liberalism has ancient roots and is based on the fact that since a person is the real source of progress in society, it is necessary to ensure their rights and freedoms, providing equal access to education regardless of social status and well-being. The basic principle of liberal education is to develop a personality that is concordant with the purpose of a liberal education in ancient times – to provide education of citizens who can become active participants in a democratic society. Hence, non-formal adult education should be continuous, focus on the development of intellectual abilities, be accessible to all sections of the population, and its content must meet their needs.

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According to philosophy of constructivism, a person is unique in their vision of the world, beliefs, outlooks because they are able to construct personal understanding of reality. The teacher is not just a transmitter of knowledge, he serves as a consultant, moderator, and facilitator.

The analysis of scientific literature showed that adult education in the USA has evolved with the development of society, has a long history and traditions, is mainly considered as informal adult education aimed at self-improvement of adults to meet their educational needs; as a mechanism of civil society formation.

Our future research work will be aimed at analysis of procedural characteristics of adult education in the USA.

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