NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: HISTORY AND REALITY

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Abstract. The objective of this paper is to report on historic-pedagogical analysis of non-formal adult education in the US, which leads to the conclusion: non-formal education is an important part in lifelong education of adults and a distinctive tendency in modern American society; the development of non-formal adult education in the US is predefined by historical interaction of economic, political and socio-cultural factors, so it is advisable to divide periods on such criteria as objective laws of political, socio-economic and cultural development of the state, social character and mass of non-formal adult education, the emergence and development of new institutional and non-institutional forms of non-formal adult education; non-formal education provides everyone a possibility to study and it happens with its own initiative for a unique, comprehensive individual plan of an adult; specific features of non-formal adult education in the US are the diversification of forms, methods and content of education with a focus on real professional and personal needs of an adult; the content of non-formal education today deals with adult personal improvement and social transformative processes in the society.

Keywords: adult education, non-formal adult education, genesis, diversification, USA.

Introduction

The dynamism of world economic and social development, the processes of globalization and integration, the transition to an information society cause a need to modernize a system of education, formation of a system of continuous education, the methodological basis of which is the concept of "lifelong learning", which is regarded as an important and obligatory component of social model in the modern society, being able to respond to the challenges of modern society and provide to a person professional and social development throughout life. Adult education is one of the important components of lifelong education. According to P. Lengrand "future of education, when considered as a whole, and its ability for renewal depend on the development of adult education" (Lengrand, 1970). In this context, non-formal adult education is considered as an equivalent component of adult education, as a socio-cultural component that reflects adult need in variety of educational services. In the USA, non-formal adult education is based on the old historical traditions and characterized by presence of significant educational achievements. Therefore, studying and understanding of American experience is useful and important.

In modern Ukrainian pedagogy American system of education has become an object of research. The problem of humanization of education in the universities of the USA was investigated by R. Belanova, O. Zabolotnaya, O. Romanovskyi; experience of organizing pedagogical education was analyzed by V. Zhukovsky, T. Koshmanova, L. Puhovskyi, M. Leshchenko; integration and globalization processes of lifelong education were investigated by T. Desyatov, V. Kudin, A. Matvienko, O. Ogienko, S. Romanova, A. Sbruyeva, the problem of female education in the United States was studied by N. Kutova, O. Terenko. Non-formal and further education of adults were studied by F. Pohhler (Germany); M. Knowles, E. Lindeman, S. Merriam, D. Mezirov, F. Coombs, S. Brookfield (USA); R. Broket, P. Cross (Canada); P. Jarvis, A. Rogers (England); L. Turos (Poland) and others. Various aspects of adult education and lifelong learning were studied by S. Vershlovskyi, B. Hershunskyi, S. Zmeyev, M. Clarin, L. Lesohina, A. Mitina (Russia). The analysis of foreign and national pedagogical literature allowed to conclude that the problem of development of non-formal adult education in the United States hasn’t studied enough that confirms its importance.
The purpose of this article is to study the genesis of non-formal adult education in the USA and to distinguish the features of its development in the modern society.

Method
For achieving of the basic objectives of our research we have used the whole complex of complementary research methods which can be described in the following way: theoretical methods of analysis, synthesis, substantiation, generalization, systematization of theoretical and practical research data. Moreover methodological basis of our research lies in scientific theory of knowledge or epistemology dealing on one hand with relationships and correlation between all the processes in objective reality and on the other hand - with the unity of theory and practice.

Results
The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature shows that adult education in the United States has a long history and some characteristics. It explains the need for its historical and pedagogical analysis, because without knowledge of socio-economic needs of society and people, as well as philosophical and social ideas of the past, it is very difficult to understand the present situation and predict the further development of this important direction in the US education.

In this context, the periodization of adult education, including the period up to 80-s of XX century (Stubblefield, Keane, 1994) draws our attention. Its criterion signs have become objective laws of political, socio-economic and cultural development of the state, the social character and mass of adult education, the emergence and development of new institutional and non-institutional forms of adult education. We will rely on this periodization in our study because the development of non-formal education took place within the development of adult education and, according to scientists for a long time adult education was in essence consistent to non-formal adult education. «The true adult education is social, not professional education» (Brookfield, 1987).

The beginning of the first period of non-formal adult education can be associated with the establishment of the first permanent English settlement on the American continent at the beginning of the XVII century. Its upper chronological limit – 70-s of the XVIII century, coincides with the end of the American Revolution or the War for Independence of America. During this period first newspapers were appeared, the libraries were opened, public readings and theatrical performances were held, the process of bringing people together in voluntary associations of interest was started; formation of analogue to modern public associations, like the "Junto", founded in 1727 by Benjamin Franklin; apprenticeship was started (Stubblefield and Keane, 1994; Grace, 2012).

The lower limit of the next period (the end of XVIII - the 70-ies of the XIX century) of non-formal adult education in the United States can be considered with the establishment of peace after the War for Independence. Upper limit coincides with the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) between the industrial North and the slave South of the country, which resulted in slavery abolition. The directions of this period: a weakening of the influence of authoritative social institutions like church and community, social reforms, the most effective of them were voluntary associations directed on personal self-improvement and development of people. If in the XVIII century to such associations were mostly entered white middle-class men, in the XIX century they became more democratic. The discovery of the Mechanic's Institutes and lyceums, free high schools, libraries and museums, lectures and discussions for adults had significant importance. "The most important for society that allowed wider participation of citizens in political life and great economic opportunities was improvement of access to education and increasing opportunities for individual learning» (Chobot, 1989; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994).

The third period in the history of non-formal adult education in the United States deals with the end of the 70 -s of the XIX century – beginning of the XX century. It begins after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery and continues until the end of World War II. Defining features of this period were industrialization of industry and using of scientific knowledge in agriculture. The main achievements in adult education during this period were Chautauqua Institute, which provided a broad general college education for non-specialists, and courses at the universities (university extension), its purpose was to introduce to the local community the results of scientific research carried out at the universities. Public lectures were very popular, they were primarily conducted in lyceums that belonged to local communities, the number of public libraries increased,
they believed in their educational mission and together with free public schools were responsible for education of people; associations were created, they united people according to professional and other interests, such as the American Library Association, the American Association of housekeeping and others. A very important innovation of this period of non-formal adult education was a permanent direct financial grant from the federal government (the Smith-Lever Bill) in agriculture, professional sphere and house-holding, resulted to radical transformation of the whole field of adult education.

The fourth period in the history of non-formal adult education in the USA started after World War I (1919) and the introduction of large financial grant from Carnegie Corporation to adult education, it was lasting until the end of World War II (1945). The defining feature of this period is formation of American Association of Adult Education (AAAEE) in 1926; with its foundation adult education was separated into a separate branch of education; introduction of wide-ranging programs in support of adult education by the federal government (Ogienko, 2014).

The fifth period of non-formal adult education in the US (1946 - late 1980s) is rightly called "the era of adult education" (Stubblefield, Keane, 1994). It begins at the end of World War II and continues in late 1980s. Separation of this period is directly connected with the formation of the system of adult education in the United States, as well as the organization of adult education around the main idea of lifelong learning as an urgent need in the transition to a post-industrial society. In 1951 American Association of Adult Education was united with the Department of Adult Education, and eventually American Association of Adult Education was formed, it became a major national organization in adult education (Knowles and Johnson, 1995). Its main goal was to unite all professionals into one national organization and to promote communication and cooperation in adult education.

M. Knowles names this period the «era of the largest deployment and innovation in adult education» (Knowles, 1962). The increase of educational level of Americans and transition to post-industrial society caused the necessity in lifelong learning; it became a standard of living, especially in the professional field. Educational institutions such as universities and colleges, free public schools, libraries, museums, and media in new conditions not only provided knowledge but also took an active part in solving national problems such as poverty reduction and competitiveness. The defining event of this period was a book by M. Knowles "The modern practice of adult education: andragogy versus pedagogy "(1970), where the key positions of a new science, andragogy, were formulated.

The modern period in non-formal adult education (90-s of XX century – up to the present) began with adoption of the bill "A Bill of Rights of the Adult Learner" (1991), it identified main guaranteed rights of the adult learner. Although that non-formal education in the United States is developing beyond the usual education system, it is purposeful and systematic. The most common types of educational institutions of non-formal education are public universities, public schools, vocational schools, various educational centers, Service for dissemination of knowledge, consulting centers and others. A characteristic feature in the modern period of non-formal education in the USA is the development of mechanisms for recognition of non-formal education, preparing teachers for adults (andragogists). (Rose, 1989; Jarvis, 2007; Ogienko, 2008).

Discussion

Thus, the development of non-formal adult education in the US is caused by historical interaction of economic, political and socio-cultural factors, so it is advisable to divide the periods on such criteria as objective laws of political, socio-economic and cultural development of the state, social character and mass of non-formal adult education, emergence and development of new institutional and non-institutional forms of non-formal adult education; non-formal education allows everybody to study and it happens on its own initiative for a unique, comprehensive individual plan of an adult; the main characteristics of non-formal adult education in the US are the diversification of forms, methods and content of education with a focus on real professional and personal needs of an adult; the content of non-formal education today deals with personal improvement of an adult and social transformative processes in the society.

Prospective directions for the future research are: to investigate the role of the state and public policy in non-formal adult education, to identify the factors that affect the motivation of adult learning throughout life.
References


