PRINCIPLES OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION FROM PERSPECTIVE OF PERMANENT EDUCATION

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This article addresses the issue of the evolution of principles regarding adult learning and education as an important segment of permanent education/lifelong learning. Emphasis is placed on the peculiarities of non-formal adult education: continuing professional training, general culture training (personal development), training community and civic participation skills. In relation to these particularities, the principles of adult learning and education are analysed and developed, but also some suggestions for valorising on these principles are proposed in the design of adult learning and education process.

Keywords: adult education, non-formal education, permanent education, lifelong learning, continuing professional training, personal development.

PRINCIPIILE EDUCAŢIEI NONFORMALE A ADULŢILOR
DIN PERSPECTIVA EDUCAŢIEI PERMANENTE

În articol este pusă în discuţie problema ce vizează evoluţia principiilor cu referire la învăţarea şi educaţia adulţilor ca segment important al educaţiei permanente/ educaţiei pe parcursul întregii vieţi. Accentul fiind pus pe particularităţile educaţiei nonformale a adulţilor: formarea profesională continuă, formarea culturii generale (dezvoltarea personală) formarea competenţelor de participare comunitară şi civică. În raport cu aceste particularităţi sunt analizate şi dezvoltate principiile învăţării şi educaţiei adulţilor, fiind propuse și unele sugestii de valorificare a acestor principii în proiectarea procesului de învăţare şi educaţie a adulţilor.

Cuvinte-cheie: educaţia adulţilor, educaţie nonformală, educaţie permanentă, educaţie pe parcursul întregii vieţi, formare profesională continuă, dezvoltare personală.

Introduction

In the context of development of the market for educational services offered to adults, an independent direction has emerged - adult learning and education. J. A. Komenský, who laid the foundations of pedagogy, spoke of the need to continue the studies in adulthood.

A person, in order to assimilate innovative technologies, needs to learn all his life. J. Dewey made a significant contribution to the development of adult education, suggesting that teaching should be centred on the student, on their experience. The ideas of A. Maslow, K. Rogers and others had a great influence on the development of adult education: the leading role of the individual in the development of society and the modern personality, personal freedom. M.S. Knowles (5) proposed to consider adult education differentially, depending on the situation (5); R.Furcher talks about the training of a person throughout their life. A group of scientists from Romania and the Republic of Moldova has studied the problem of adult learning in the framework of lifelong learning (G.Văideanu, A.Neculau, V.Şoitu, V.Cojocaru, Vl.Guţu etc.).

Adult education has become a complex process, which is of increasing concern to teachers. And teachers for adults have become a special category, requiring special competence. They place themselves in the position of those who constantly build projects, who carry out their activity with a permanent view to the future [1].

Specialists in the education sciences record four "founding currents" in adult pedagogy (Maubent, 2004):

a) the *behaviourist* one, emphasizing the behaviour of individual, from which was born the pedagogy of objectives and the cult of tools and methods of controlling progress;

b) the *humanist* and *personalist* one, which highlights the trainer-format relationship;

c) the *critical* current, which aims to restore to formation its value as an instrument of a social and political critique;

d) the *constructivist* one, insisting on the learning process [2, pp.44].

At the same time, the problem of adult education is becoming relevant for such international organizations as UNESCO, Council of Europe, etc.

It was UNESCO that recommended that non-formal adult education be considered not as additional, but as part of national education systems.

Between 1980-1990 UNESCO secured for adults the right to education and training and outlined the dominant trends in the field of adult education:

- transformation of the authoritarian-totalitarian education system into a democratic one and decentralization of management, which sharpened the need for well-trained management personnel;
- "explosion" of the existing system of knowledge due to the introduction of new information technologies [3, pp.12-13].

In turn, the Council of Europe proposed the concept of lifelong learning for adults.

The study of adult education as a socio-cultural phenomenon has contributed to the fact that the educational needs of adults acquire social significance, they are no longer considered an exclusively personal problem. F. Peggeler clarifies the priorities of interaction between the adult individual and educational institutions: the independence of individual and the adaptation of educational institutions activities to its needs (and not vice versa) [4, pp.10].

The tendencies of the last decade are associated with the involvement of the adult population in implementation of 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030) and the formation of key competences for lifelong learning (Brussels, 2018).

At each stage of the development of adult education and depending on one or another conceptual approach to this problem, the principles of pedagogy for adults were also formed.

Regularities and principles of education and upbringing for adults

In 1976, at the UNESCO General Conference, adult education was defined as *a set of organized educational processes, extending the initial education, through which all persons considered adults in a society or culture to which they belong can develop their skills, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification, reorient their attitudes and behaviors in a double perspective: through integral personal development and through participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development* [5, pp.45].

Adult education therefore aims to develop all the social roles that any human individual can play: professional, family, civic, cultural, leisure.

The concept of adult education has five normative characteristics (Bhola, 1985):

- *globality and continuity*: because it extends throughout life, having a permanent character, the phrases "continuous, recurrent education" "the second chance" are also used; and because it aims at material and social progress, the assumption of responsibilities, UNESCO insists on the phrases "community development" (set of principles and methods designed to arouse, among the members of a community, an interest in material and social progress) and the will to assume responsibilities) and "community education" (principle according to which education must develop the interest for the community and the improvement of the quality of life);
- *the indispensable minimum*: all people need a fundamental education, a basic education, an educational minimum in order to understand the mechanisms of community life and civic responsibility;
- *structural freedom*: the possibility to be educated outside the traditional school institutions;
- *utility:* functional character, helping the individual to solve their life problems;
- *equity:* the offer is addressed equally to all, especially to the disadvantaged [6, pp.45-46].

It has always been considered that the guiding principle of adult education was the principle of self-education, as the basis for the cultural development and self-development of the individual.

One of the first classifications of the principles of adult education is found in the work "Adult education at the turn of the century: questions of methodology, theory and practice [7, pp.34-36]:

- culture-centrism – the socio-cultural orientation of adult education as an important factor in the economic and spiritual development of society;
- anthropocentrism – the activity and independence of the individual, the scientific nature of the content of adult education. V.I Charnolussky believed that such education is based on the study of the individual, taking into account socio-political and historical factors and the characteristics of local conditions. P.F. Kapterev proposed including the history of philosophy in the adult education programme in order to systematise the knowledge that constitutes the basis of the worldview, emphasized the importance of the social disciplines of literature, history, geography for the social and cultural development of the individual [8];

- The main characteristics of adult education V.I. Charnolussky believed to be the following:
- general accessibility of adult education – full equality in the right to it and its being absolutely free of charge;
- democratic, humanistic nature of the educational process – the independence and activity of an adult in the educational process, focus on development, self-development and self-improvement of the individual;
- provision of all strata of the population with forms of education that meet their needs and demands; differentiated consideration of interests, pluralism of educational forms and their organic integration;
- reliance on self-education, focus on interconnection and coordinated interaction of educational and cultural-educative structures;
- social character of adult education as a factor of effective functioning and its productive development and improvement; wide participation of public organizations, collegiality, publicity, self-government and independence of educational structures;
- financing of adult education by providing zemstvos with sufficient funds for these needs, as well as allocations at the disposal of public self-government [9, pp.34-36; 10, pp.7].

The functionality of these principles is correlated with the following conceptual and methodological provisions:

- highlighting "adulthood" as a socio-psychological phenomenon;
- formation of the relative autonomy of adult pedagogy as a result of the differentiation of pedagogical knowledge due to social, economic and psychological factors, as well as the isolation of the subject of pedagogical research and the formulation of their specific tasks;
- highlighting some of the features of adult education in its institutional forms (mainly in the professional sphere);
- description and analysis of the experience of adult education, comparison with "school" education;
- humanistic orientation of education as a factor of compensation for missed opportunities and adaptation of adults to the requirements of scientific and technological progress;
- improvement of educational processes [11, pp.14-15].

Adult education is not a simple addition or continuation of school education, but a special system based on its own principles and functions, having its own structure and organization, new content. Its main purpose is to help a person in self-determination and search for adequate ways to independently resolve any problems [12, pp.44].

The following four directions of adult education are conditionally distinguished [13, pp.214-215]:

1. compensatory – the elimination of gaps in general education knowledge, the provision of repeated opportunities for obtaining a systematic education at the secondary school level;
2. satisfying educational needs – the promotion of scientific knowledge and culture, education in matters of family and marriage, health care, organization of leisure and "education for the third age";
3. "development of the community through education" – activating by means of education the participation of the population in the economic, political and cultural life of society, as well as coordinating the use of various local resources (district, city, etc.) for education, and, consequently, for activating social environment;
4. professional – obtaining professional qualifications by those who wish.

The main requirements for the adult requalification system are provided by:

- *predictive value*, i.e. principled focus on dynamic changes in the socio-economic and industrial environment and variable educational needs of the population;
- *variability* - a variety of educational services in accordance with the educational needs of the individual;
- *adaptability*, contributing to a flexible reorientation of the content, forms and methods of teaching, creating great opportunities for operational reprofiling and retraining of personnel to work in market structures and meet individual needs of the personality;
- *accessibility* as the most important condition for the state guarantee of citizens' rights to education.

In the system of adult education at the present stage, the following areas are distinguished: *general cultural* (elimination of elementary illiteracy or expansion of general education); *professional* (obtaining a profession, advanced training, eliminating functional illiteracy, retraining at all levels: primary, secondary, higher, post-

graduate); *additional* (additional non-formal educational programmes and services for more productive acti-vities of citizens of the same interests).

Integration of general cultural and professional education expands the possibilities of self-determination and spiritual development of the individual, understanding their place in society, increases the professional competence of adults and at the same time helps them to understand the processes taking place in society, to overcome the mythologized consciousness. As a cultural sphere, *integrated education* develops the creative powers and independence of people, improves their communication skills. The priority is not ready-made knowledge of a particular science, but the methods and means of obtaining them.

Social, economic and political education prepares citizens to participate in the democratic process, to manage the affairs of society at all levels, to understand doctrines and theories, and to selectively and critically approach the information received.

Cultural education should not "inculcate" any role model that has developed in the representation of certain sectors of society. Its purpose is to promote the formation of a person or a group of people of their own attitude to cultural values - the best examples of world culture, language, culture of thinking and feeling, activity and communication [14, pp.44-46].

Adult learners are distinguished by the presence of industrial, every day and educational experience, motivation to learn. All this can both contribute to and hinder successful learning, so it is advisable not only to prevent the occurrence of possible problems, but also to turn them into incentives for learning.

Work experience. The learner can easily adapt if the new job presupposes the same skills. This shortens the time it takes to learn new skills. At the same time, the formed negative work experience can be transferred to a new situation: it is very difficult to unlearn, especially with age [15, pp.106].

Previous training. Negative learning experience makes it difficult for successful promotion, lengthens the learning period, positive experience shortens it. In addition, modern methods of self-study are practically unknown to adults. And this component of the educational process is now assigned an increasingly significant role.

Level of education. In the conditions of modern production, the requirements for the educational qualifi-cation of personnel are constantly growing. People who do not have the required knowledge and skills can experience psychological discomfort, lack of confidence in their abilities, which, in turn, can provoke refusal to study, make it difficult.

Degree of motivation to study. The desire to learn, the enthusiasm shown by students are directly related to what they expect for themselves in the future. Perhaps they do not want to move to a new job, but they cannot refuse it, as this can worsen their position in the organization (meaning the amount of earnings, career prospects, etc.). In such cases, a person disguises his dissatisfaction, for example, under the inability to form new competencies.

Age. Long-standing perceptions of the learning disabilities of adults and older people, supported by some educators, can also diminish their potential. Retraining elderly people is a specific task. They usually learn more slowly and require more attention than young people. Their eyesight and hearing may not be as sharp, their memory is not so strong, and their self-confidence is insufficient. If negative work or training experience and an insufficient level of education are added to this, then the need for a special organisation of training in this category becomes obvious.

An adult learner is, first of all, a person with established life values. The need for their transformation in the process of education is perceived by adults painfully, they put up "barriers" of perception. Factors contributing to the formation of such barriers include: stereotypes of professional activity, which lead to the attitude that everything is already known (the barrier of prejudice against innovations and changes); internal uncertainty, generated both by the need to restructure activities in new conditions, and by a decrease in "professional self-esteem" when changing occupations (for persons who have lost their jobs or decided to change them under pressure of circumstances); the absence (destruction) of the established "student" skills and abilities, in particular in self-educational activities. Hence the lack of confidence or unwillingness to fulfil the duties and requirements of the role of the "student". The higher the professional status of an adult is, the more difficult it is for them to "learn" [16, pp.107-108].

The most important condition for successful self-determination is the purposeful formation or correction (rehabilitation) of the personality's self-awareness. Thus, the following areas of personality development can

be singled out as the main ones: the development of self-awareness and the need for self-education, the culture of communication, the culture of a healthy lifestyle, intellectual culture, training and self-education, the culture of leisure.

The upbringing of an adult personality should be based on a qualitatively new interpersonal communication. It should develop an interest in self-knowledge, the psychological (inner) world of a person, their consciousness, needs and feelings, views and beliefs. This type of communication puts increased demands on the teacher – their ability to set an example of humanism in communication and actions. As a result, the ability to respect and reckon with the unique individual characteristics of another person should be formed. Since the individuality of a person is formed in the process of communication, it is one of the most vivid and holistic forms of self-expression of a person (intellectual, emotional, volitional).

The humanistic approach implies that as a result of the interaction of teachers and educators, individual mental and physical inclinations are improved, new social relations and personality traits are formed, methods of independent activity, a style of thinking, cognition and communication are developed, the personal meaning of life is determined [17, pp.119].

The humanistic approach to adult education is based on *the following principles*:

✓ *Purposefulness of the educational process*. The principle is leading and assumes predictability and planning of the upbringing process. At the same time, planning should be forward-looking and focused on the main goal - the mood for the constancy and continuity of the self-improvement process. In addition, it is necessary to monitor the progress and results of the upbringing influence.

✓ *Orientation on personality as a backbone component of the educational system.* The principle is humanistic and personality-oriented, since it involves the elevation of the individual to the head of the system. It is in accordance with its needs and capabilities that the goal of adult education is set. An adult has the right to count on being reckoned with, on their active participation at all stages of building and implementing educational influence. They act as a full-fledged subject of the educational process.

✓ *Social orientation of education.* Personality cannot exist outside of society. It is prepared for life in society and with its help. In the upbringing of an adult as a social being, it is necessary to take into account the influence (spontaneous and organised) of the social environment. The realisation of the educational potential of the collective (group) is based on the socio-psychological and socio-andragogical mechanisms of the formation of interpersonal, intergroup and within group and other processes. In a broader sense, this principle presupposes an orientation towards the requirements of society, the prospects for its development. The principle is closely related to the social goals of education, integrating state and personal needs. However, one should not think that leadership is given to society, the team, the socio-cultural environment. This does not correspond to modern trends in society, science and industry. Personality remains the priority.

✓ *Reliance on positive personality traits.* The principle that every person has a positive beginning is inherently optimistic. This is the starting point of any educational process and requires from the teachers a belief in the positive results of education, in the desire of any person to become better. To maintain and develop this aspiration, an adequate system of methods, means of education and motivation is needed.

✓ *Humanism of the educational process.* The principle focuses on the identity of the individual, regulates trusting and respectful relationships based on the authority of the teacher, mutual cooperation, empathy, and benevolence. The principle presupposes the creation of a favourable psychological climate and emotional background.

✓ *Consistency and integrity of the educational process.* The need to use this principle is due to the multifactorial nature of this process. Consistency presupposes an integrated approach to the multilateral educational process (goals, content, methods and forms), taking into account the interests of all participants in the educational process, as well as external influences and formed internal personality structures (values, needs, beliefs, ideals, interests). However, in order to implement this principle, it is difficult to create a truly all-encompassing system based on the unity and continuity of educational processes, taking into account the cyclical nature of personality development.

✓ *Taking into account individual personality traits.* The principle is significant for pedagogy, but even more relevant in adult pedagogy. For adults, the variability of combinations of environmental influences and personal reactions is so great that an average approach to the personality can give a negative result.

The principle aims at the formation of individuality as a personality trait that predetermines the construction of the educational system - the choice of means and methods of working with a specific individual, the study of them and the conditions of their life. Therefore, monitoring the progress and results of the educational process is so valuable. Taking into account the age characteristics of adults predetermines the specifics of the pedagogical process itself.

✓ *Stimulation of vigorous activity and reliance on positive personal experience.* The principle defines activity as the most effective method and result of the educational process. A person develops in the process of active independent activity. Education is based on the optimal combination of different types of activities. At the same time, the teacher should stimulate the activity of adults, their creative freedom. When working with adults, one cannot but take into account the negative experience already accumulated by them, which will restrain positive transformations in the personality and can "explode" at any moment. We should try to turn the experience that life has endowed the personality into the basis for further development.

✓ *Multifactoriality and sufficiency of educational influences.* It is known that a person perceives the entire the variety of environmental influences. If the teacher does not take them fully into account, the decisive factor may fall out of their field of vision. In addition, an adult should have the right to choose: what to follow, what to refuse. The multifactorial nature allows these conditions to be realized.

✓ *Focus on the motivational sphere.* A person needs constant "tuning" for any action. Personal motivation is such a tuning mechanism. If it is weakened or lost, the upbringing process will be ineffective. The principle includes the internal levers of self-education of the individual [18, pp.120-122].

It should be noted that some scholars distinguish the principles of adult education and the principles of adult education in separate categories, although they consider them in unity.

So S. I. Zmeev [19, pp.92-93] refers to the principles of teaching adults:

✓ *Priority of independent learning* as the main type of educational work for adults. This implies that not only the mastering of educational material should be independent, but also the organization, planning and implementation of the educational and cognitive process.

✓ *The principle of joint activities* of the student with the teacher and other students in planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning process. This does not contradict the previous principle, since it is impossible to provide fully effective learning without the participation of an andragogue teacher or ignoring the experience of the learners.

✓ *The principle of reliance on the experience of the student.* According to this principle, the life (everyday, social, professional) experience of the learner is used as one of the sources of training for both themselves and their study partners. The possibility of a new understanding of the accumulated knowledge and skills is assumed.

✓ *Individualisation of training.* In accordance with this principle, each student, together with the teacher, and in some cases with other participants in the educational process, creates an individual training programme focused on specific educational needs, experience, level of training, psychophysiological and cognitive characteristics. It is supposed to build training in the most comfortable conditions, style, pace, etc. All this taken together is initially aimed at achieving a single level of training for all students.

✓ *The principle of contextual learning,* on the one hand, pursues specific, vital goals for the student, focused on the fulfilment of social roles or personal improvement, and on the other hand, it is built taking into account the professional, social, everyday activities of an adult and their spatial, temporal, professional, household factors (conditions). No matter how important the training is for the learner, it is an additional, auxiliary type of activity. Consequently, it is necessary to flexibly adjust the organisation of training to the well-established life and production activities of the student.

✓ *The principle of learning outcomes actualization* presupposes the immediate application of the acquired competencies by students in practice. This denotes the maximum practicality of the teaching content.

✓ *The principle of teaching eclecticism* gives the student a certain freedom to choose goals, content, forms, methods, sources, means, terms, time, place of training. At the same time, the learner assumes responsibility for the learning outcomes, which positively affects the effectiveness of learning.

✓ *The principle of developing educational needs* focuses on the fact that, firstly, the assessment of learning outcomes is carried out by identifying the real degree of mastering the educational material

and determining those materials, without mastering which it is impossible to achieve the set learning goal, and secondly, that the learning process and formation of new educational needs of students are concretized after the achievement of the previous learning goal [20, pp.161-162].

It should be noted that most scientists consider the principles of education and the principles of teaching as a whole. So, B. Sansier, offers the following system of principles for teaching and educating adults:

- ✓ **The main responsibility for learning lies with the student themselves** as a voluntary subject of education, which leads to a redistribution of roles, responsibilities and views of the learners and teachers. A volunteer student has a certain amount of knowledge and experience. For a more successful performance of the established functions, and even more so when the nature of the work changes, there may be a need for new knowledge and skills.
- ✓ **Personal or professional needs stimulate the specialist's desire to learn.** The student's baggage contains the previously acquired knowledge, experience and understanding of what skills he possesses and what he lacks, and the teacher should be ready to help form/develop them. Consequently, the more active role of the learners requires from them to participate in the planning processes of the nature and methodology of continuing education programs.
- ✓ **It is necessary to apply a variety of forms of continuous education.** Most commonly, the most common forms of formal and informal learning are used.
- ✓ **Changing the conditions under which the continuation of adult education is expected requires the development and approval of new forms of assessment and encouragement,** including the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that contribute to improving the quality of work, promotion, salary increase, getting a more prestigious job and personal growth.
- ✓ **It is important for the teachers to remain flexible, responsive to emerging needs and challenges within adult pedagogy.** It is important to take into account the fact that in the context of continuous professional education, the problems of an active, creative approach and quality learning are often raised.

It seems interesting and important to analyse and present the principles proposed in the framework of the adaptive competence of adult learning (A.I. Berg, G.Pask, Ya.Z. Tsynkin, V.I. Podobeda, A.E. Marona).

According to this concept, the main principle of adult education is *mandatory effectiveness (the principle of effectiveness)*, a guarantee of obtaining the result that an adult learner needs, improving in some way the quality of their life.

Increased personal interest, increased practicality of training should be dominant.

Another important principle is the sustainability of the results, as the main indicator of the quality of adult education. It means that these results should not be inhuman, worsening the quality of life of an adult, but on the contrary, they should always be valuable, humanistic, and productive.

A very important principle of adult education is *the valeology of achieving results*. To achieve the results one needs, an adult, as a rule, is ready to work hard, but to the best of their abilities - temporary, physical, intellectual. In this sense, learning should not crowd out other important functions for adults. A good education as an end must be relative to the funds that adults invest in the learning process.

Within the framework of this concept, a very important principle is *the principle of ingenuity*, the adult's right to participate in the development of goals, the content of training, as well as in the definitions of the methods of learning.

The culture of individual choice is based on selection and a special combination of collective, group and individual forms of educational activity.

The development of the creative potential of any person, their hidden abilities to do what they did not do before training, is the most important psychological and pedagogical principle of adult education. At the same time, training is structured in such a way as to influence a person's openness to new things, overcoming stereotypes, and the flexibility of their thinking. With any content of education, technologies that do not affect the deep nature of a person, but slide over the surface, creating an effect of increasing knowledge that does not affect a person, are not humanistic in their essence, because they do not affect meaning-making, deep values.

The patterns of human interaction with information flows bring adult education closer to the implementation of the "hidden field" theory created by American scientists, according to which the process of work of interest to a person is creativity.

Psychological comfort as a principle of teaching, the ability to communicate with everyone - that is, both teachers and learners, and learners among themselves - helps a person's self-realisation, it is mandatory for any content and method of teaching.

Let us call the latter one of the essential principles of adult education - optimism of teaching, strengthening in an adult often suffering from various complexes, the faith in themselves, in their own capabilities.

But only in the aggregate, this and other principles create a reference model for assessing the performance of an andragogue, the success or failure of the adaptability of adult learning. It's like a complex system - the loss of one of its elements bleeds the entire system [21, pp.47-48].

The principles of adult education not only do not contradict the general pedagogical, but also constitute (or should constitute) a single whole within the framework of general pedagogy [22, pp.163].

Analysis of various approaches to defining the principles of teaching and educating adults in the framework of non-formal education allows us to draw the following **conclusions**:

1. The formation of the system of principles of adult education was predetermined by historical contexts and prerequisites and reflected one or another approach to this process. At the same time, all experts are of the opinion that adult education is not just an addition to education, and not even additional education, but an entire branch of the education system as a whole. And lifelong adult education, both formal and non-formal, is not a separate education system, but a principle on which the entire education system should be based.

2. In view of general development trends, the basic principles of lifelong education are determined by scientists in one key: humanistic character; democratisation of education as the integration of formal and non-formal educational structures of the traditional and new types; flexibility of curricula and programmes, alternative approaches to the organisation of the educational process; special attention to the education of women, youth, people with disabilities; independence and self-direction of learning; connection of learning with life, professional and social activity of the individual. Continuity of education is characterised by: the duration of the training period - the entire life cycle; motivators for continuing education - changes in the surrounding reality; goals and objectives of training - human self-realisation; creation of a network of educational services, covering all possible types and forms of education - formal and informal.

3. The presented categories of principles create new preconditions for their development and the designing of *Framework for Non-Formal Adult Education*.

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Prezentat la 27.04.2021