

COMPARING THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLES OF ADULT EDUCATORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE IN UKRAINE

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The article describes differences in the implementation of adult education practice in the American and European traditions (the USA and the UK mainly) and the competences of those who provide the adult education process. The study draws upon the existing theories on adult education which include continuing (the USA) or further (the UK) education, community education, recurrent education, non-formal education, popular education, lifelong education etc. This diversity makes it difficult to describe the profession of adult educators and their roles, because their activity defines itself in terms of their clientele. Comparative analysis reveals that in American and European countries adult educator's roles have overlapping meanings, which depends mostly on the activity the educators perform. It is argued that in both analyzed countries researchers indicate a lack of training for adult educators, and a huge number of volunteers and part-time educators, who often do not view themselves as adult educators. Among the roles that are recognized in the UK, except the traditional teaching role, adult educators are often involved as tutors, organizers, administrators, managers, entrepreneurs, animators, advisors, campaigners, leaders of the group, moral leaders, and "change agents". In the USA the roles of adult educators are distinguished within the context they appear in. Their spectrum is wider and the responsibilities are better defined. They include teaching, program development, training and human resources development, community actions, but those roles also mean active participation in the educational process, where educators of adults perform as critical analysts, provocateurs, co-learners, consultants, activators and "change agents", whose responsibility is to empower. The description and comparison of those overlapping adult educators' roles are vital and very important for promoting the concept of adult education "professionalization" in Ukraine. Those roles should be reflected also in training that adult educators receive.

Keywords: adult education, adult educator, adults, adult educators' roles and competencies.

Introduction. Socio-economic and technological changes taking place nowadays actualize the issue of adult education, which in turn, requires the development of teacher training system for those who are ready to fulfill the role of adult educators. Extensive experience and traditions in training adult education specialists is intrinsic to many foreign countries, such as the USA, Canada, Great

Britain, Sweden, Poland, France and others. Thus, it is important to analyze and systematize their experience for further development of adult education in Ukraine, while taking into consideration the opinion that “context and culture shape the form that education takes in each country” [13, p. 183].

Many Ukrainian and foreign researchers devoted their works to the development of adult education and searched for the definitions of andragogical competencies, among them O. Anishchenko, S. Boltivets, L. Lukyanova, O. Ohiyenko, S. Vershlovsky, S. Zmeyer, M. Knowles, S. Brookfield, J. Mezirow, P. Jarvis, S. Merriam. Analysis of their works shows that there are some evident differences in the implementation of adult education practice in American and European countries. Therefore, **the goal of our study** is to define and compare the American and European perspectives on the roles of adult educators, find the existing distinctions and explain them through adult education philosophical and historical background, social and cultural context in order to foster further development of adult education field in Ukraine. For our analysis we have chosen two countries, where the system of adult education is highly developed and was established long ago: the USA and the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

To define such a complicated phenomenon as an adult educator we should first define the field of adult education. One of the most famous definitions, widely cited in the USA, was proposed by S. Merriam and C. Brockett (1997). After a substantial review on existing descriptions of adult education field the authors define the concept as “activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults” [13, p.8].

According to Peter Jarvis (1995), in the United Kingdom the term “adult education” is mostly used within the liberal education framework and has a stereotype of being middle-class, leisure time pursuit [9, p. 55]. There is a belief that institutional adult education is an extra, a luxury that has to be paid for by the individual and this is why serious academic study of adult learning only began to penetrate British universities, once adult educators were seen as having a social mission [2, p. 156].

Many authors have difficulties to define it more clearly because the term is used with at least three different meanings: the process of adult learning, a set of organized activities for adults, and a field of social practice (Knowles, 1980; Jarvis, 1995), but it is noted that the scope of educational activities is very wide. “The breadth and diversity of what is comprehended within the term “adult education” varies from country to country, if indeed a concept of it as a distinctive process or system exists at all” [9, p. 184].

There are many other terms connected with education of adults. They are continuing (USA and Canada) or further (UK) education, community education, recurrent education, non-formal education, popular education, lifelong education.

This is why it is difficult to define who is an adult educator and what are their roles, because their “activity defines itself in terms of the clientele” [3, p. 9]. Merriam and Brockett (1997) give the most general but the most understandable definition and call adult educators “those who deliver learning opportunities” to adults [13, p. 115]. Authors also indicate the existing debates among theorists on who is and who is not an adult educator. Their opinion is supported by Legge (1991), whose research on adult educators training in England and Wales shows that “many those active in the field do not recognize themselves as “adult educators” [11, p. 60]. As in case of adult education that never was compulsory there was always a belief that no general training for educators of adults was needed [2, p. 156]. This is also true for modern Ukrainian practice, when the educational activities provided to adults are not always seen as adult education, and practitioners do not recognize themselves as educators of adults.

Despite the differences in adult education definitions, scholars in both analyzed countries, agree on main categories of adult educators: the full-timer, the part-timer, and the volunteer (Jarvis, 1995; Merriam and Brockett, 1997, Legge, 1991, Brookfield, 1988). Having analyzed their works we can come to a paradoxical conclusion that full-time adult educators can be employed in a variety of institutions, with or without teaching role, while part-time and voluntary educators are more likely to be actively involved in teaching process. There is always an altruistic motive in their work and enjoyment is a reward [9, p. 167].

The largest debates, which our analysis reveals, relates to the roles of adult educators. Legge (1991) indicates that in England many specialists in adult education have overlapping roles. They include a “tutor-organizer”, an administrator, who also teaches, and an advisor [11, p. 60]. He points out that adult educators combine multitude of tasks, when in fact many teachers of adults still lack formal training and the quality of their work is variable [11, p. 59]. Jarvis (1995) supports this statement with some statistics data, pointing out that 41 per cent of part-time tutors in the East Anglian Regional Advisory Council area were qualified day school teachers [9, p. 172]. They can play roles of entrepreneurs, administrators, managers, wheeler-dealers, animators, trouble-shooters, expert on methods, and campaigners [9, p. 167]. According to Legge, in England local educational authorities are the major providers of training for educators of adults, and there are more than one hundred of them [11].

Alan Rogers (1996), one of the famous practitioners in the field of humanistic adult education in England states four main parts for adult educator to play: 1) a *leader of the group*, whose purpose is to keep the group together and keep things going; 2) a *teacher*, an agent of change; 3) a *member of the group*, subject to the pressures it exerts; 4) an *audience*, the person whom the group members perform their learning [14, p. 161].

While working with adults, educators become more than teachers for their students. They usually get involved in their lives, because the experience and personal stories are the important components of adult learning, and are involved in some community actions [9, p. 36].

While in the United Kingdom adult educators' roles are identified in accordance to the tasks and activities they perform, in the United States there is a tendency to determine those roles by the context, goals and purposes of educational activity. Thus, Brookfield (1988) emphasizes that major roles of adult educators are those of teachers, program developers, administrators and counselors that pretty much coincides with the definitions of Legge (1991). Nevertheless, Brookfield distinguishes educators' roles within a context, in which they appear, and thus groups them into four categories: teaching roles, program development roles, training and human resources development roles, community action roles [3, p. 19]. *The program development* role includes conducting needs assessments (qualitative and quantitative), designing instruction, managing committees, counseling current and potential learners, preparing and administering budget, course marketing, and evaluating program effectiveness. Educator's role in the *training and human resources development* in American adult education occurs mostly within business and industry fields means (1) being a learning specialist involved in instruction, curriculum and materials development; (2) being an administrator involved in personnel development, supervision, community relations, and budgeting; and (3) being a consultant involved in changing organizational behaviors, stimulating others to learn, and advocating unpopular or little known views [3, p. 22].

In the *community division* of adult education the roles of adult educators differ from those described above. They perform their duties mostly as activators, animators, change agents, and community activists [3]. Activators are not directly involved in the process of teaching. Their roles are to identify the agencies and organizations, which lack educational involvement. Animators and change agents have the roles that are more concerned with the societal change. They are called to assist community groups to identify problems and achieve previously defined goals. According to Usher (1997), community education unites the concept of both – radical and liberal adult education: “it attempts to combine the critical structural analysis of the radicals and a more specific social purpose of liberal adult education” [15, p. 35]. Its aim is: providing individuals with knowledge which they can use collectively to change society if they wish, and particularly equipping members of the working class with the intellectual tools to play a full role in a democratic society or to change the inequalities and injustices of society in order to bring about radical change [15].

Both, American and European researchers, indicate the issue of “professionalization” of adult educators working outside the mainstream: health

educators, librarians, prison educators, religious educators, community developers, popular, non-formal, distance educators, and social activists, who “align themselves with a social action or radical agenda, calling into question accepted norms, social structures, and educational practices” [13, p. 247]. Thus, one of the distinctive roles of the adult educator that differ him/her from a schoolteacher is a role of a “change agent”, who works in the direction of students’ empowerment through critical analysis and reflection.

One of the major views on the role of American adult education as a field is to prepare adults to compete in the global market economy. Similar tendency towards “vocationalization” of adult education is also observable in the UK. Existing capitalist market economy with its demands on high productivity and constant competition, forces adults to improve their work skills in order to be able to retain their job and compete with others. “The common good is now to be regulated by the law of the market, free competition, private ownership and profitability. In essence, the definitions of freedom and equality are no longer democratic but commercial” [15, p. 38]. Some researchers recognize this tendency as oppressive, the one that leads to viewing adult education profession as business, narrowing the whole idea of adult education to the economic purposes and satisfaction of basic human needs while neglecting those important aspects of education as moral leadership, development of intellectual ability and social awareness of adult population. This phenomenon is described as of “hidden curriculum” or “hidden criteria” and viewed as knowledge gained during the process of education: development of students’ personal traits and attitudes, their motivations, awareness of real-life economics, and reflective thinking which are called “behavioral outcomes” [6, p. 73]. Teaching to understand the power distribution in the society or evaluate its main political and economic forces should become one of the major goals for adult educators in order to develop socially aware and critically conscious citizens who will become a powerful investment for further societal development and the democracy maintenance.

According to Askov, another issue that arrives when pouring finance only into work-related programs is the changing concept of the whole adult educational field based on voluntary participation and self-directed learning because often participants must attend these programs in order to maintain welfare benefits [1]. Such an involuntary engagement could be an explanation for the programs’ high dropout rating, and low levels of participation.

In the postmodern world literacy is often understood as a series of discourses to be mastered depending on the situation and context the individual is placed in. J. P. Gee (1996) explains this new notion of literacy as “integrated-social-cultural-political-historical literacy studies” [8, p. 122]. He critiques traditional approaches to literacy understanding as economy driven and dependable. Even those with high school certificates and college degrees often need additional education in the

pursuit of lifelong learning in response to constantly changing demands of the world around, such as technology improvement, globalization, migrations, changes in the workplace, and self-actualization. Literacy can also mean the acquisition of a “secondary discourse”, which is the most common practice in the US for every immigrant entering the country. ESL programs, as the kind of adult literacy education, are one of the most important ways for newcomers to get the understanding about the country, its history, geography, economics, social and political order, its cultural diversity and values. There are the channels through which the processes of newcomer’s socialization, their secondary discourse/language/culture acquisition is happening. “Discourses are the ways of being in the world, or forms of life, which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities” [8, p. 127]. Thus, adult literacy courses only for employment purposes with emphasis on resume, cover letter or job proposal writing, can result in educating resistant, passive and socially ignorant citizens. It will also continue the process of minority groups’ marginalization, viewing them as powerless, outsiders, “the others”.

Even workplace adult education that one can argue is the most economy and market driven and the one that addresses recent policies about preparing adult to compete in global market economy shouldn’t ignore the issues of a holistic lifelong learning. Competitiveness, which is emphasized and promoted by capitalist economic relations, appears as one of the standards for adult literacy. It makes workers to become alienated and isolated from each other. Instead of empowering the workers, it results in their passiveness and fear to lose a job. The main problem of this outcome, according to Tara J. Fenwick (2000), is the lack of acknowledgement about power dynamics and identity struggles that are rumbling underneath program solutions and the lack of understanding that learning and development is not essentially the individual process but a complex communal activity that weave workers and situation together [7].

Today adult education forms and types are becoming more diverse in terms of goals, process, organizational structure, curricula and pedagogy. They demand on the revisiting and reconsidering traditional educators’ roles, because of the blurred barriers between education, leisure, and entertainment. Democratic education or education for democracy means education without suppressing differences, diverse range of interest and locations within the social formation. Moral education, Usher (1997) argues, has been known as something that adult educators should know and dictate, because education must have a moral purpose. He proposes “the lessening of the power of the adult educator to define what constitutes worthwhile knowledge and serious learning, questioning the notion that learning must always be shaped by the values of progress [15, p. 24]. Thus, he welcomes all voices in the classroom to be heard, and everybody’s opinion to be valued. Adult education consumers should become the main judges for program

effectiveness. They, alongside with teachers and administrators, should become the main participants in program development who define its context, curriculum and instruction.

Conclusions. From this analysis we come to the conclusion that adult education roles have overlapping meanings, which depends mostly on the activity that educators perform. In both American and European traditions, researchers indicate a lack of training for adult educators, and a huge amount of volunteers and part-time educators, who often do not view themselves as adult educators. Among the roles that are recognized in the UK, except the traditional teaching role, adult educators are often involved as tutors, organizers, administrators, managers, entrepreneurs, animators, advisors, campaigners, leaders of the group, moral leaders, and “change agents”. In the USA the roles of adult educators are distinguished within the context they appear in. Their spectrum is wider and the responsibilities are better defined. They include teaching, program development, training and human resources development, community actions, but their roles also include teacher’s equal and active participation in the educational process when they perform as critical analysts, provocateurs, co-learners, consultants, activators and “change agents”, whose responsibility is to empower students. The description and comparison of those overlapping adult educators’ roles are vital and very important for promoting the concept of adult education “professionalization” that is still often questioned. Those roles should be reflected also in training that adult educators receive.

The notion of educator as a “change agent” coincides in both countries. It again supports the goal of adult education, which is students’ empowerment and changing unequal power relations. Education is never neutral. It is a tremendous ideological force for the state to establish its political and economic priorities. Recent adult literacy policies, which address only employment skills and job acquisition, thus indicate the strengthening state’s priorities in the global market economy participation, while ignoring the priorities and voices of major consumers in adult literacy – its students. Their voices and needs must be taken into consideration. Community, individual, and family development literacy are just as important as the workplace achievement. Seeing those areas as equal would be the most beneficial for both: learners and society.

It also should be mentioned that for the world adult education practice the policies prevailing in the USA and UK – two major players on the global market arena will have a huge effect on other developing countries. Focus only on human capital/resources development will result in similar policies in other countries, who are dependable on the US and UK funds. It will continue the process of colonialization and market dependency, thus neglecting the process of civil global society development.

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ПОРІВНЯННЯ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОЇ ТА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ КОНЦЕПЦІЙ РОЛЕЙ АНДРАГОГІВ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ ТЕОРІЇ І ПРАКТИКИ ОСВІТИ ДОРΟΣЛИХ В УКРАЇНІ

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Розглянуто особливості впровадження практики навчання дорослих в американських та європейських країнах (на прикладі США та Великобританії) та компетентності тих, хто забезпечує процес навчання дорослих. Дослідження обґрунтовано сучасними теоріями освіти дорослих, які включають безперервну (США), тривалу (Великобританія), громадську, народну, безперервну, повторну, неформальну освіту тощо. Різноманітність теорій і термінології ускладнює опис професії андрагога та ролей, які він виконує у процесі своєї діяльності, оскільки навчання відрізняється в залежності від особливостей споживачів освітніх послуг. Порівняльний аналіз дає змогу стверджувати, що в американській і європейських концепціях андрагоги виконують множинні ролі, що потребують різних компетентностей, але дослідники вказують на брак або відсутність у них професійної підготовки через велику кількість волонтерів або викладачів за сумісництвом, які не вважають себе освітянами дорослих. Основними ролями, які відображають функції і діяльність андрагогів у Великобританії, окрім традиційних, є: репетитори, адміністратори, менеджери, агітатори, радники, підприємці, лідери, та “агенти змін”. У США основними видами діяльності андрагогів виокремлено: навчальну, методичну (розробка навчальних програм і методів), організаційну, розвиток людських ресурсів, громадську, в процесі якої вони виступають у ролях критичних аналітиків, провокаторів, співавторів, консультантів, активаторів, агентів змін тощо. Опис та порівняння ролей, які виконують освітяни дорослих, є особливо важливими для розвитку і професіоналізації освіти дорослих в Україні та планування процесу підготовки майбутніх андрагогів.

Ключові слова: освіта дорослих, андрагог, дорослі, андрагогічні ролі та компетентності.