

**Педагогика**

**УДК 378**

*Ольга Бересток*

*(Сумы, Украина)*

### **ADULT LEARNING: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

*Аннотация:* в работе рассматриваются проблемы современных технологий образования взрослых: теоретико-методологические основания образования взрослых; содержание образования взрослых; технологические аспекты образования взрослых; информационное обеспечение образования взрослых; организационные аспекты образования взрослых.

*Ключевые слова:* образование взрослых, технологии образования, информационное обеспечение, образовательные программы.

*Annotation:* The article deals with the problems of the modern technologies in adult education, such as theoretical and methodological background of adult education, essence of adult education, technological aspects of adult education, informational provision of adult education, organizational aspects of adult education

*Keywords:* adult education, educational technologies, informational provision, educational programs.

There are numerous factors which motivate adult learning and sometimes it's a combination of issues which lead them to make that decision.

If you've been out of education for a long time, you will have thought long and hard before reaching the decision to go back to learning as it can seem quite a daunting prospect, especially if there are any financial implications and additional commitments you need to take into consideration.

However, should you decide to go ahead, it's likely that your reasons for doing so will include one or more of the following factors.

Is adult education a practice or a program? A methodology or an organization? A 'science' or a system? A process or a profession? Is adult education different from continuing education, vocational education, higher education? Does adult education have form and substance, or does it merely permeate through the environment like air? Is adult education, therefore, everywhere and yet nowhere in particular? Does adult education even exist? (McCullough 1980 quoted in Jarvis 1987a: 3). [1]

Just how are we to approach adult education if it is everywhere and nowhere? As a starting point, Courtney (1989: 17-23) suggests that we can explore it from five basic and overlapping perspectives. [2] Adult education as:

- the work of certain institutions and organizations. What we know as adult education has been shaped by the activities of key organizations. Adult education is, thus, simply what certain organizations such as the Workers Education Association or the YMCA do.
- a special kind of relationship. One way to approach this is to contrast adult education with the sort of learning that we engage in as part of everyday living. Adult education could be then seen as, for example, the process of managing the external conditions that facilitate the internal change in adults called learning (see Brookfield 1986: 46). [3] In other words, it is a relationship that involves a conscious effort to learn something.
- a profession or scientific discipline. Here the focus has been on two attributes of professions: an emphasis on training or preparation, and the notion of a specialized body of knowledge underpinning training and preparation. According to this view 'the way in which adults are encouraged to learn and aided in that learning is the single most significant ingredient of adult education as a profession.
- stemming from a historical identification with spontaneous social movements. Adult education can be approached as a quality emerging through the

developing activities of unionism, political parties and social movements such as the women's movement and anti-colonial movements.

- distinct from other kinds of education by its goals and functions. This is arguably the most common way of demarcating adult education from other forms of education. For example:

Adult education means entering university and further education college, publicly funded provision made by a local authority, with the Workers' Education Association (WEA), or in community settings. Adult education is also named lifelong learning. Within universities it has also been known as Continuing Education.

Adult education can be for leisure, skills, re-training, qualification, and progression. The definition of 'adult' varies from provider to provider.

Some forms of adult learning are called non-vocational education. Some recent European Governments initiatives were around 'informal learning' meaning in this respect learning which is not contributed by the state or institutions.

In the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education's Inquiry (in England and Wales) into the future for Lifelong Learning it is distinguished in the following way:

- in educational organizations, at work, at home and through leisure activities.
- people of all ages learning in a variety of aims

It concentrates basically on adults coming back to coordinated learning rather than on unplanned learning.

Adult Education in Europe has its own history and tradition. The focal point is on conveying democratic competence. In addition to information about the framework of the state and society, this also includes the qualification for personal engagement on behalf of the state and society.

What is typical for Adult Education in Europe?

Most adult education in Europe takes place in colleges of further education (FE) or universities providing higher education (HE). Many FE colleges now propose HE courses.

The stress in FE is in skills and vocational qualification. Publicly funded non-vocational education has traditionally been led by local government working with a 'safeguarded' budget.

Adult Education in Europe has brought about extraordinary things. The exchange of experiences and best practices between European countries is to be accepted.

The EU encourages this by maintaining contacts and activities in the sphere of education which stretch out across borders and are almost always achieved by mutual interest and accompanied by the taking up of interesting ideas.

In Europe in which social and civic contacts across borders are routine, the requirements are of course present for imparting knowledge of positive experiences with citizenship education in other countries, which can in turn implement these as a source of encouragement and an enrichment of their own practices.

On the contrary, Adult Education of one country can also undoubtedly learn from the traditions, customs and different approaches in other countries and develop further.

*Responsible public institutions/ ministries.*

Adult education in England is currently the responsibility of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

It gives a set of policy branches - innovation, science, business sectors and law, economics and statistics, employment matters, trade and export as well as adult, further and higher education.

The Department for Education is in charge of education and children's services but also has responsibility for 16-19 education.

*Providers of Adult Education.*

Local authority created and provided adult education of a non -vocational one is arranged through a protected fund (adult safeguarded learning) by Government.

This million provision has been stable for long period but was not brought down back in the very recent budget.

Further education colleges and training institutions are basically engaged in vocational and skills related education.

*Employers create a lot of training.*

Universities through their lifelong learning departments (which are usually called Continuing Education or Extra Mural departments) also arrange adult education with some Government subsidies.

'Informal learning' (Government definition) is supplied through libraries, galleries and museums as well as by community and voluntary organizations like University of the Third Age, The Women's Institute ( in England and Wales), Arts associations, clubs and societies.

The media has also had a considerable part to play in promoting and providing adult learning.

Adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully.

Thus if there is to be an overarching function of the adult education enterprise, it is to assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions, in their social roles (worker, parent, retiree etc.), to help them gain greater fulfilment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems. (Darkenwald and Merriam 1982: 9). [4]

Darkenwald and Merriam combine three elements. Adult education is work with adults, to promote learning for adulthood.

Approached via an interest in goals, 'adult' education could involve work with children so that they may become adult.

As Lindeman (1926: 4) put it: 'This new venture is called adult education not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity, defines its limits'.  
[5]

Different societies and cultures will have contrasting understanding of what it is to be adult. 'Adult' can be set against 'child'.

In between adult and child (or more accurately, overlapping) there may be an idea of 'youth'. At base adults are older than children and with this comes a set of expectations.

They are not necessarily mature. 'But they are supposed to be mature, and it is on this necessary supposition that their adulthood justifiably rests' (Paterson 1979: 13).  
[6]

Most current texts seem to approach adult education via the adult status of students, and a concern with education (creating enlivening environments for learning). We could choose a starting definition from a range of writers.

Rather than muck around we have taken one advanced by Merriam and Ralph G. Brockett (1997: 8). [7] They define adult education as the activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults.

This definition has the virtue of side-stepping some of the issues around the meaning of 'adult' – but doesn't fully engage with the nature of education. However, it is a start.

*Finances.* Adult learning in Europe is funded from a huge diversity of public, private and voluntary sources.

The national Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning (in the United Kingdom) is making an effort to evaluate the total scale of this expenditure. Its current work proposes that total expenditure from public sources exceeds £30 billion per year, but

the National Employers Skills Survey suggests that employers spend £38 billion per year.

Of this total expenditure, some 95% is spent on an economic aim learning. The last decade has shown a very substantial increase in education expenditure in the United Kingdom.

Over the decade from 1995-6 to 2005-6 total expenditure by the education departments enlarged in real terms (corresponded to inflation) by 46%, to a total of £67.1 billion (a rise from 4.9% to 5.5% of GDP), of which 29% is given to post-compulsory education and training.

Nevertheless, the majority of this 29% is consumed on the fundamental education of young people (16-19 year olds in Further Education and 18-22 year olds in Higher Education), and it is impossible to indicate this from expenditure on adults, since much teaching is in age mixed classes and institutions.

### The Primary Determining Factors Which Influence Adult Learning

Personal advancement - this is the most common reason given for adults who want to learn. It can encompass the opportunity to gain promotion in your current workplace and, therefore, to increase your income.

It can facilitate a career change or you may be motivated by keeping ahead of competitors by taking a particular course. And, if you're out of work, it can often provide the stepping stone to getting back on the job ladder.

Self-improvement - learning will increase your knowledge which, for many, will also improve your self-confidence. Your self-esteem will go up as a result of proving your abilities in completing a course successfully

Stimulation and escape - learning in itself is an opportunity to break free from any rut you might have found yourself in. You may have become bored with your current routine, either within your personal or professional life (or both), and learning will

often be the kick-start you've been looking for to motivate yourself again and can also offer an 'escape' from the daily humdrum which you might feel you're experiencing.

Increasing your social relationships - whether you have a number of good, loyal friends or you feel you've become a bit isolated, many adults choose to return to learn as it will widen their social network in terms of creating new, additional friendships or will offer them the possibility of making new friends with whom they might share some common ground.

External influences - sometimes you'll find adults who would not otherwise necessarily choose to return to learn but are doing so as it's expected of them by others.

By this, it means that it could be your employer who requires you to go on a course or, in some cases, if you've been unemployed for quite some time, it may be that you're asked to choose a course of learning in order to remain eligible to continue to receive state benefits.

Cognitive interest - many adults choose to return to learn simply because they have an enquiring mind and a mental 'thirst' to absorb more knowledge about a particular subject they are interested in.

This would also include people who wish to pursue a particular hobby but need to understand more about it first and also those who may have undergone lifestyle changes. A good example here would be retirees who are looking for something to fill their time in order to make their lives more meaningful. [8]

Many adults will say that they would love to go back to college or university or undertake some other kind of academic or vocational course to further their career prospects or just for pleasure but that they simply don't have the time to do so.

And, it's certainly true that juggling the commitments of a full-time job with, perhaps, family commitments as well in addition to maintaining some kind of



work/life balance are all factors that can make adult learning seem to be an unreachable goal.

However, with the advancement in technology particularly, plus a more flexible approach by colleges, universities and other further education providers and employers too, it's never been a better time to achieve your aims. It does, however, require a certain amount of planning, a steely determination on your part and perhaps the co-operation of others also.

### E-Learning

The internet has probably been the single most important aspect in revolutionising education, especially when it comes to adults. There are so many options available now for people to undertake courses online independently of any need to be in a particular place at a given time.

Of course, distance learning is nothing new. For example, the Open University is possibly the most famous example of this and it was established back in 1969. However, with the internet, there has become a far broader approach in terms of the types of courses you can do and, in many cases, you can simply work through your online courses completely at your own pace and at times that suit you.

There is another article contained on this website which goes into more detail about the range of e-learning, distance learning and correspondence course options you might consider.

### Attending College

If you prefer a college based setting as opposed to simply working your way through a course online from a remote location, many colleges, universities and other education providers are only too familiar with the difficulties adults face in juggling their work and family commitments with further education.

These days, most education providers will be able to offer you a great degree of flexibility whereby you'll find many 'hybrid' courses which combine, perhaps, a

couple of hours in the evening per week, or even in the daytime if you prefer, in a classroom setting along with your peers and tutor, whilst the vast bulk of your work can be carried out from a computer at home at a time that suits you.

There are also intensive courses which you can complete over a weekend, for example, if you have a full-time job in which your weekends are free and you don't have any other commitments over that period.

### Training At Work

Most companies today are keen to retain the services of their most valuable employees and are always looking at innovative ways in which they can fulfil the career aspirations of their most valued employees which, in turn, tends to be rewarded in terms of staff loyalty and staff retention.

Therefore, it's well worth speaking to your company's training and development department to see if they can help you achieve your learning ambitions. Many companies will make it possible for you to work 4 days a week, for example, and attend college or obtain training on the other day as part of your working week. Many will also offer you intensive 1 or 2 weeks training courses as part of your employment contract.

The NIACE investigation estimated that the total spending on adult learning provision by investor could be no less than £55 billion with a further £38 billion per year expended on the time invested in learning.

They consider both figures to be under evaluated. Of the £55 billion £34.65 billion (63%) was spent on development of employee with £16 billion which the private sector had provided.

On the other hand, their basic conclusion from their analysis enclose the following: 65% of total public spending in 2007-8 on post-compulsory education (£9.75 billion) was expended on higher education, three quarters of which was evaluated as gone to learners under age 25.

*Participation level.* NIACE annual adult learning participation survey gives data on learning by age, gender, previous education experience, regional variations, and ethnicity. Its 2009 survey proposed an increasing learning divide:

- ethnic minority adults overall report higher current participation (26%) than white adults (17%).

- people in full time (47%) and part-time (49%) are more likely to report current or recent participation in learning than unemployed people (40%), and far more likely than people who are not in paid employment (27%) or who are on pension (16%).

- the older you are the less probably you are to take an active part in learning with 20-24s (61%) nearly twice as likely as 55-64s (31%), and more than three times as likely as 65-74s (18%) - but the Government's Foresight investigation on mental well-being showed how learning has positive benefits on health of older people.

- new or recent participation among unemployed adults dropped by 3 percentage points between 2008 and 2009, from 43% to 40%, while the quantity of unemployed have risen,

- current or recent participation among full-time workers enlarged by 2 percentage points between 2008 and 2009, but since 2002 it has fallen from 52% to 47% NIACE's 2010 investigation stated that:

- the proportion of people reporting no learning since leaving school has dropped dramatically from 37 per cent in 2009 to 31 per cent in 2010 (marking a total four percentage points below any previous study) and making understandable that the rise in participation is getting adults previously untouched by adult learning;

- the overall numbers planning to study has increased in 2010 to almost half (47 percent), the highest figure reported in a 20-year sequence of NIACE surveys. Nearly as significant is the drop - from 47 per cent in 2009 to 34 per cent in 2010 - who say they are very improbably to take up learning during the following three years.

An ever more increasing trend these days also is for companies to offer you a year-long sabbatical or 'career break' after a certain number of years of service which could also enable you to attend a course and then return to your job afterwards. [9] Benefits might include: access to good quality training, improved job satisfaction, more career opportunities.

If employers can't help. If a person can't get training through the employers, there's nothing to stop arranging it himself.

Adult education provides opportunities for personal growth, goal fulfillment and socialization. Chris McAllister's research of semi-structured interviews with older adult learners shows a motivation to communicate with people and to get out of the house to keep mentally active. [7] Researchers have documented the social aspects of older adult education. [8] Friendship was described as important aspects of adult learning and the classroom was seen as an important part of their social network. The development of social networks and support was found to be a key motivation of adult learners. As editor of a book entitled Adult Education and Health, Leona English claims that including health education as part of adult education makes for a healthier community. [9]

Apprenticeships - earn while learning. To give the best chance of success in career, it is necessary to carry on developing skills throughout working life.

Apprenticeships give the chance to learn - and gain nationally recognized qualifications - while getting a weekly wage. There are more than 180 Apprenticeships available across more than 80 industry sectors.

They include accountancy, business administration, construction, engineering, manufacturing and many more. First it is necessary to decide which career suits the best.

Next, it is important to judge whether to commit to the demands of an Apprenticeship. This means juggling work and study long-term - a period of one to five years.

How long does an Apprenticeship last? It varies. Most last between one and two years, though some take up to five. How long it takes will depend on the profession to choose, the level of ability and employer's needs.

Some experts claim that adult education has a long-term impact on the economy and that there is a correlation between innovation and learning at the workplace. [10]

Adult education can have many benefits ranging from better health and personal well-being to greater social inclusion. It can also support the function of democratic systems and provide greater opportunities for finding new or better employment. Adult education has been shown to have a positive impact on the economy. [10]

### **ИСТОЧНИКИ И ЛИТЕРАТУРА**

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