

# Andragogy: Searching for Ways to Improve the Educational Process in Educational Institutions for Adults

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**Abstract:** The topic of the article is relevant because at the present time there is a renewal of the education system and the search for ways to improve the learning process in educational institutions for adults continues. In the studies of educators in the 1920s in the conditions of keen discussions a wide range of organizational forms and methods of adult education was highlighted and scientifically substantiated. Traditional in the teaching of adults, as well as in school practice, was the classroom teaching system. Its basis was the usual forms of classroom work - lecture, conversation, discussion, debate, storytelling, etc. The purpose of the article is the study of ways to improve the learning process in educational institutions for adults in the works of domestic and foreign scientists, the study and presentation of organizational forms and methods of adult education; the description of the organization of independent work of students by performing their research tasks. An important place in schools for adults was given to organization of independent work of students through implementation of their research tasks - term papers, essays. The use of the method of excursions was also widespread, the issue of application of the method of staging in the practice of teaching adults was substantiated. Group, individual and self-educational forms of organization of education have also become widespread in adult schools.

**Keywords:** *classroom system, classroom work, Dalton plan, laboratory plan, independent work of students, the method of excursions, the method of staging.*

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## 1. Introduction

Optimization of the content of adult education and the search for perfect forms of its implementation have become one of the important aspects of the development of adult didactics. Specific forms of organization and methods of teaching were reflected in separate books, numerous articles and speeches of theorists and organizers of adult education, as well as in documents of local authorities, educational institutions, NGOs and educational institutions directly involved in adult education (Gurevych et al., 2020; Honcharuk et al., 2021; Povidachyk et al., 2021; Shahina, 2017; Zhurat et al., 2020).

The scientific substantiation of the organization of adult education was carried out within the framework of the development of general problems of pedagogy and in the context of the theory and practice of out-of-school education, which was constituted as an independent branch of pedagogical knowledge before the beginning of the XX century.

The classroom system was traditional in adult education in the early 1920s, as well as in general school practice. Numerous methodical documents, instruction letters and various recommendations clearly guided organization of adult education to conduct classes according to the classroom system and arrangement of students in groups of 25-30 people, which corresponded to the standard class. Curricula, programs, topics and the number of hours were designed for lessons in standard academic hours.

The basis of classroom teaching grounded on usual forms for classroom work - a lecture, a conversation, a discussion, a debate, a narrative, etc. Methods of using classroom forms in schools for adults with the attempts to substantiate their theoretical and methodological principles are presented in the works of Korotkova, (2016), Pokrovsky, (1923), Petrova, (2010), Medynsky, (1923), etc.

Forms of classroom work based on the living word became widespread and dominated in pre-revolutionary times. However, in the context of radical political, ideological and educational changes, they were increasingly assessed as “outdated” and inconsistent with the principles of the new school for adults. To abandon the previous methods and forms of education, when “the people passively perceived the spiritual food that was given to them in the “ready to use form” - urged Zvyagintsev (1918, p. 17), the author of “Principles of extracurricular education and its living forces” (1918).

Zvyagintsev (1918, p. 16) notes that initiative is a prerequisite and guidelines for organizing education in schools for adults and educational work in general. “Let the student learn and remember less ready-made information than with the dominance of the previous methods, but, - the

teacher is sure, - he or she will approach the subject on his own and acquire it as much as possible from all sides; the process of learning a subject by a student is more valuable from a didactic point of view than the fact of his or her acquaintance with the subject. The greatest pedagogical achievement is only possible, says Zvyagintsev (1918, p. 16), when "...the student is put in the position of an interested and careful researcher, and... he or she should not only listen and contemplate the available, but must himself/herself feel, consider, observe, touch, show, draw, sculpt, act and create".

Medynsky (1923, pp. 219-221) determined that the main principle in adult learning was development of activity and independence in an adult, his/her involvement in self-education. In the work "Encyclopedia of Extracurricular Education" (1923) he emphasized: "Teach the student to compare, distinguish and summarize phenomena of life around", "make them on the basis of presented facts to work out an idea, so that the students themselves made conclusions - the joy of creativity, logical thinking will enliven the whole lesson", "teach them to take independently from the surrounding life".

Similar positions were defended by Golant & Shiryayev, (1929, p.171). In the book "School work with adults" (1929), they noted: "Our school seeks not only to provide certain knowledge, but also to cultivate the ability to work independently".

Based on the leading role of the teacher, the prevailing classroom system of education in schools at that time, according to teachers, did not allow to properly organize an independent work of students; not adapted to the individualization of educational work, limited to conducting collective work in the form of cooperation, etc., (Golant & Shiryayev, 1929, pp. 171-172).

Research to improve the learning process in adult education institutions has been studied by foreign scholars: V. Bepalko (1989) proved that the level of research skills in adults is different, so it is important to provide the opportunity to choose the level of independence in the performance of research procedures. Therefore, he proposes to distinguish three such levels in the performance of experimental research by students.

D. Halpern (2000) proved that the psychological basis of students' research activity is their search activity, which is inherent in every person. Search activity, in turn, predetermines the research behavior. According to T. Shen and J. Lai (2013), research activity, unlike search activity and research behavior, is conscious and purposeful, involves the application of appropriate cultural tools.

## 2. Organizational forms and methods of adult learning

Of all the “traditional” methods, the lecture was the most condemned. Critics rightly pointed out that this form of work accustoms students to passive perception, kills their initiative and creative attitude to learning, does not allow to clarify the requests of the audience and the degree of digestion, forces to focus on part of the audience, etc. (Medynsky, 1923, pp. 35-36).

Discussions about improving the educational process in adult schools expressed ambiguous views on the use of lectures. Extremely radical position on this issue was demonstrated by the organizers of Soviet schools, declaring “as their goal a complete abolition of the lecture” (Communist Enlightenment, 1922, p.101). “There is no better method for educating dogmatists than the lecture method,” said Brunelli & Tsybulsky (1930, p. 87), a researcher and propagandist of the laboratory plan. Ryndich, (1926), softening this assessment, found the obvious failure of the lecture as the dominant method of teaching.

In contrast to the “method of ready knowledge”, the methodologists of the adult school put forward the “search method”, or research method. It should be noted that in the name of the method itself, the science of that time was characterized by terminological diversity. In the works of various authors, it received the following names: research (Bogolyubsky, 1925; Pinkevich, 1925), search method (Vsesvyatsky, 1925), active labour (Afanasyev, 1998), research labour (Kamenev), laboratory research (Popova, 1927), laboratory (Chelyustkin, 1928).

Despite the fact that the concept itself in terms of terminology and essence has many unambiguous interpretations, still in the mid-1920’s the thesis of the leading role of the research method in the educational process was firmly established in the Soviet pedagogical science.

However, in the contemporary literature on adult didactics, it is rarely mentioned. Ignatiev (1926), substantiating the research method in teaching nature study to an adult audience, wrote that “it is most useful to put the student in the position of a researcher, discoverer of the laws of nature”, that learning a subject should involve studying of the subject. Hence the great role of observations, visual aids, excursions.

Probably, the term “research method” did not become firmly entrenched in the didactics of adults, because everything related to increasing the activity of students in learning began to be covered by the laboratory plan, which gained considerable popularity.

Since 1922, no issue related to adult teaching methods has attracted as much attention as the Dalton Plan or the Lab Plan. No other method of teaching has been talked about or written about so much. At all teachers' meetings, in almost all collections and journals related to adult learning, the laboratory plan invariably remained the subject of discussion. The 1920s left a large amount of scientific literature and archival materials about it.

In 1923, Dewey's book "The Dalton Laboratory Plan" was published in Russian in the USSR, and in 1924, Parkhurst's book "Education and Training according to the Dalton Laboratory Plan" was published.

In a review of the book Krupskaya (1959, p. 94) wrote: "This plan is very exciting and deserves the most careful study". Krupskaya (1959, p. 94) wrote a preface to the book, in which some ideas of the Dalton experience were also praised. The following features were defined as positive in the Dalton plan: it brings up the ability to work according to the plan, calculating strength and time; teaches how to learn; gives everyone the opportunity to move at their own pace, allows the student to clearly see the purpose of work; increases activity, initiative and responsibility in work; increases interest in work, its intensity, allows to combine individual work with teamwork, etc.

In the Dalton plan, domestic researchers were attracted, first of all, by the opportunity to develop students' skills of independent work, as well as the reflection of modern methods of industrial labour. The Dalton plan was interpreted as a form that stimulated activity and initiative of students through the use of research methods. Among the strengths of the Dalton plan were the following: helping students understand the purpose of cognitive activity, which gave it a conscious character and formed a sense of responsibility for work; individualization of the learning process (the ability to plan work and time, if desired, choose one's pace); creating conditions for independent, to some extent free activity of students (elective classes), which stimulated their activity and initiative, developed creative potential, gave pedagogical work flexibility and dynamism; the emergence of preconditions for productive communication, cooperation based on joint activities of teachers and students, which opened up prospects for harmonizing combination of interests of the individual and the team. The positive aspects of the Dalton Plan were noted in the works of Blonsky (1926) and Pinkevich (1925).

At the same time, the works of Soviet teachers of the period under study also contained criticism of certain aspects of the Dalton Plan. First of all, the target parameters of the Dalton Plan, which, in their opinion, were aimed at development of individualism and the bourgeois value system, were criticized (Abrami et al., 2008). Pinkevich (1925), in particular, noted that

training according to the Dalton plan in the United States has as its main purpose preparation of a businessman and a dealmaker. Blonsky (1926), Vsesvyatsky (1925), Levin (1925, p. 58) pointed out that the Dalton plan eliminates the leading role of the teacher, ignores the emotional side of learning process and is largely a modification of the old, pre-revolutionary forms teaching.

It was unequivocally recognized that the Dalton Plan in the American interpretation was unacceptable for the local conditions. In an effort to overcome the shortcomings of the Dalton plan as a form of learning organization, Soviet educators made a number of adjustments. All of them were aimed at strengthening the role of collectivism, which was necessary for formation of a new type of personality. These tasks and ways of their realization were substantiated in the works of Kalashnikov (1925), Rives (1937), Svadkovsky (1926).

In the pedagogical practice of the second half of the 1920s, the Dalton Plan was transformed into a laboratory-brigade form of organization of the pedagogical process, which became widespread, especially in adult education.

The name “laboratory plan” comprised not only similar methods and systems. What they had in common was the strengthening of students’ independence and the research nature of their actions. It is this aspect that stands out in the various definitions and characteristics of the laboratory plan. “The student takes the knowledge himself. This is the core of the plan” (Brunelli & Tsybulsky, 1930, p. 25). “Orientation on research forms ... is the main guiding slogan” (Filshinsky, 1925, p. 51). “The main feature of the laboratory plan is the research method” (Ryndich, 1926, p. 37).

Organization of classes on the laboratory plan in the “classical” form was reduced to instructions in work, independent processing of material by students and summarizing of work. Accordingly, in the structure of the laboratory plan there were three successive stages: 1) introductory lesson (introductory conference, instructional lesson), 2) laboratory elaboration of the task and 3) final lesson (final conference, summary lesson). The introductory lesson had the task to pose a problem to students, to orient them in the difficulties associated with the study of the topic, to indicate its importance, to give methodical advice (how to work, why such literature should be taken earlier, how to approach a particular issue). At the stage of laboratory work, students work with special equipment, various materials, educational literature, documents, make necessary notes (abstracts, theses, conclusions, etc.), with constant consultation from the teacher study the material. At the final lesson the acquired knowledge is refined, generalized

and reduced to a single system, attention is focused on the key issues of the topic, the used methods of work and the obtained results are discussed, the degree of mastering is revealed.

The “American” Dalton Plan does not have a fixed schedule of laboratory classes. In Soviet practice, there had been a long and lively discussion of the issue of schedule, fixed or free. Many articles noted that a fixed schedule has its advantages and disadvantages, but a free schedule is possible only under ideal working conditions (proper equipment in sufficient amount, good preparation of students for work, etc.). Brunelli & Tsibulsky, (1930), spoke in favour of a fixed schedule. In their descriptions of the laboratory plan, the terms “instructional lesson”, “generalizing lesson” are constantly used, which seems to emphasize the existence of the laboratory plan within the classroom system of education. Official pedagogy recognized that “the free schedule, for all its advantages, still occupies only a certain place in our laboratory system”, in an unprepared audience it is better to adhere to a fixed schedule with precise regulation of class hours.

One of the most important elements of the laboratory plan was the assignment. “The concept of “the assignment”, explained Brunelli & Tsibulsky, (1930), should cover not only a number of subtopics to be studied, but also the process of independent work that must be completed by the student to come to a formalized system of knowledge”. That is, the assignment was considered as a certain guide of the student in his training, it included not only achievement of result, but also performance of a certain process of work. In the assignment it was suggested to pose such questions that require not just to find a direct answer in the book, but require some work of the student on the analysis and generalization of the studied material.

The laboratory plan fundamentally changed the place and role of the teacher in the learning process. From the leader and organizer of the student body, he/she became a consultant and an observer. “The teacher only manages, the team learns by itself, draws its own conclusions... The teacher should not intervene much in the work of students. He/she only observes the progress of work and, if necessary, helps, indicates how to work”, such direct instructions to minimize the role of the teacher were contained in one of the manuals for adult schools “To the liquidator of illiteracy” (Central Administration for Transport Education, 1925, pp. 6-7).

At the same time, special requirements were set for the teacher. In this regard, the researchers and propagandists of laboratory training Brunelli & Tsybulsky (1930, p. 53), wrote: “The teacher is an organizer-SOList (from “SOL” - scientific organization of labour). He/she should not organize in general, but scientifically organize the work of students”. The literature

emphasized the active leadership role of the teacher at all stages of the laboratory plan, including during the laboratory processing of the material. He/she should be neither a guardian, a tutor, nor a passive and silent observer, nor an answerer to random questions, his/her role is broader and more complex. Brunelli & Tsybulsky (1930), in this regard remarked: “The first and main requirement - the teacher should not find himself a way out of a difficult situation, but together with the student. He/she does not help dogmatically, does not say how to solve difficulties, but creates, organizes conditions for overcoming difficulties by the students themselves”. The teacher “organizes conditions” - this is a very valuable indication of the role of the teacher. Continuing this idea, Brunelli & Tsibulsky (1930, p. 56), wrote: “The teacher does not present ready knowledge to students, but teaches them how to learn to acquire knowledge themselves: the task of the teacher is to teach to learn”.

Despite the fact that most scientists saw in the laboratory plan the main way to improve educational work, it was, as a rule, not absolute, did not become a universal method. Only certain teachers, placing great hopes on it, believed that all other methods did not deserve attention. Thus, Ryndich (1926, p. 3), already in 1925 warned that the Dalton laboratory plan in the development of Soviet didactics is “one of the stages, not a universal method, as depicted by some authors”, that lectures and other methods do not contradict the principles of the laboratory plan. Milyutin, (1926, p. 41), wrote that the laboratory plan “not only includes, but also provides for the use of various methods, the use of all that has been accumulated by previous experience”, changes only the role and place of these methods.

Laboratory classes in the system of the laboratory plan were provided in three types: 1) obligatory independent work in the presence of the teacher and in the hours defined by the fixed schedule; 2) independent work in classrooms at the student’s free choice, during the teacher’s duty hours; 3) independent processing of material at home and in the reading room. Collective classes, which aimed at communicating mostly ready-made knowledge, were also of three types: a) introductory (for future assignments), b) additional (lectures, conversations to study certain parts of the course), c) generalizing (based on results of laboratory works) (Pchelko, 1926, p. 10).

The laboratory plan in the literature was characterized as a method and as a system of educational work. In particular, Brunelli & Tsybulsky (1930), believed that the laboratory plan is not a method, but a system that covers the entire process of educational work of the student from beginning to end, all its stages, all aspects; it is the scientific organization of educational work, the study of the student in the process of his study and organization



of the educational process in accordance with the result of this study. If it was a laboratory method, it usually meant active self-study of the material by the student. In this case, it was considered as the main method of the laboratory plan.

Teachers who put into practice the laboratory plan or its elements, in the vast majority gave it a positive assessment. The most widely the laboratory plan was used in the Soviet party school, then in the working faculties and in the advanced secondary schools for adults. It was less common in workers' universities and one-year courses, but even in these types of schools, teachers sought to use it whenever possible.

Thus, the laboratory plan in the theory of adult education was a new phenomenon, significantly different from the Dalton plan. It has become primarily one of the methods of educational work in the classroom system, the main feature of which is greater independence and activity of students in acquiring knowledge. This is, in fact, laboratory work, which is understood as an independent study of phenomena in laboratories, classrooms, libraries with experiments, reading literature, analysis of original documents, etc. At the same time, as a rule, individual work was envisaged and no recommendations were given for creation of any permanent teams that took place in the children's school.

Discussion of issues related to the introduction of a laboratory plan in adult schools is one of the interesting pages in the development of Soviet pedagogical thought. All this work is first of all valuable by attempts to pose and partially solve such cardinal problems of didactics as activity and independence of students in educational work, development of self-education skills, the role and place of a teacher and students in organization of educational process, scientific organization of work in education.

During the study and discussion of the laboratory plan issues, many contradictions of an objective nature were revealed: the teacher's guidance and the student's independence in learning; fixed schedule and individualization in learning; free schedule and pedagogical guidance; independence in learning and slowing down the pace; individualization and teamwork; laboratory plan as a defined system and the need for various methods; educational and research work of students and the level of skills of independent work, etc. Any violation of disproportions, fascination with a certain part, loss of sense of proportion lead to a violation of the educational process, turn the scientific organization of work in the educational process in its opposite. And this one-sidedness, of course, took place both in theory and in practice. But they were constantly adjusted. For us, first of all, positive ideas related to increasing the activity and independence of students,

if they are implemented with a sense of proportion, remain valuable (Karasievych et al., 2021; Khatsaiuk, 2021; Kosholap et al. 2021; Onishchuk et al., 2020; Ovcharuk et al., 2021; Palamarchuk et al., 2020).

### **3. Organization of independent work of students through performance of research tasks**

In the pedagogical literature, such research tasks as term papers or abstracts were recommended and used in adult schools. Their essence was the independent work of educational and research nature on any more or less complex problem for a relatively long time. The student received a topic, independently developed it, studying literature, textbooks, specific phenomena of nature, social life and production, and made reports on it.

The most rational of the project method is largely reflected in the research tasks. The project method is usually associated with the ideas of American educators Dewey (1923), and Kilpatrick, (1918). In Soviet pedagogy Blonsky (1926) and Ignatiev (1926), were at the origins of educational projects. Proponents of the project method declared it the only transformation of the “school of learning” into a “school of life”, where acquisition of knowledge will be carried out with the direct work of students. At the same time, subjects were denied, and systematic acquisition of knowledge at lessons under the guidance of a teacher was replaced by work on implementation of project tasks.

Krupskaya (1959), tried to find out the possibilities of applying this method or its elements in adult schools and for industrial propaganda in the article “Project Method”. She saw in it one of the ways to connect theory with practice, to develop initiative, persistence, independence, developing the ability to observe, plan, weigh the circumstances, calculate one’s strength. Ryndich (1926), reminded that the method of projects should be considered only “as one of the methods of educational work”.

An important place in school didactics and in the didactics of adults was occupied by the method of excursions, which provided for acquisition of knowledge by acquaintance with the studied objects and phenomena at their immediate location. This method is distinguished as an independent one in the classifications of Ananyin (1922) and Blonsky (1926).

In the 1920’s in general didactics a classification of excursions was made and the technique of carrying out was offered, their place and value in educational process were defined. Merging with this general flow and somewhat isolated, there was development of an excursion of adult learning.

Krupskaya (1959), strongly recommended the use of excursions in adult education. She justified the need for excursions primarily by the specific

nature of thinking of the adult audience, the emergence of opportunities to directly observe the objects and phenomena being studied, to connect theory with practice, with the life around. "The study of life must be based on observation," she wrote. It is necessary to teach students to look and see. Excursion method is just the method that pursues this goal. Previously used only in the field of natural sciences, the excursion method now covers all areas of knowledge, attention is paid to the connection of excursions with the curriculum, to prepare for excursions and summarize them".

Researchers of adult didactics according to the degree of independence and activity of students divided the excursions into laboratory (research), illustrative and mixed. Laboratory excursions "take place in the conditions of the maximum self-activity of students", their head is their consultant; in illustrative excursions the explanations of the head take the main place; at mixed excursions part of work is carried out by students independently, a part with the assistance of the head (Krasnukha 2016, pp. 155-160).

During laboratory excursions it was offered to develop tasks which provide considerable independent work of the students: to the introductory part sources for preliminary acquaintance are recommended; a number of questions are being prepared for the main part, which the student must answer while studying the observed material; to the final part it is offered to make corresponding conclusions and generalizations (Krasnukha 2016, pp. 156-158).

In the 1920s, comprehensive excursions were developed and used in the practice of adult schools, with the aim of working on material from several subjects when getting acquainted with one object. All the authors of the works on excursions were unanimous in the fact that "the excursion method in the school of adults is quite possible and necessary".

In some didactic works of that time the method of staging (or "practical" method) was discussed, and sometimes used in the practice of adult education. It received a theoretical justification in the works of Nevsky (1917). The scientist proceeded from his well-founded position that adult learning and especially its preparation for community service should be carried out mainly in practice, and "lectures and books should only design, only synthesize this work and give it some necessary theoretical prerequisites" (Nevsky, 1917, p. 41). He recommended staging the People's Court, city council meetings, etc., believing that "staging meetings in the study of social sciences should play the same role as the experiment (school experiment) in the study of natural sciences" (Nevsky, 1917, p. 42) that staging a meeting is the best excursion into society. On the basis of these general recommendations, "debates" were conducted in the study of individual disciplines. For example, some students played the role of

“materialists” in the debate, others - “idealists”, preparing in advance for their role by studying the relevant literature; they also acted as representatives of various political currents. “Trials” were arranged over literary heroes.

The method of staging in the works of Medinsky (1923, pp. 168-198), Zhemchuzhny (1927), is classified as one of the “methods of effective work”, which also includes dramatic improvisations, propaganda booth, red stage, agit-courts, live cinema, charades and riddles. However, they were used mainly as forms and methods of political education. As separate episodes in educational and especially in extracurricular work, various staging and dramatizations are quite appropriate, but they were not widely used in the didactic process of adult schools.

Group, individual and self-educational forms of education have become widespread in adult schools, especially in institutions for the illiterates.

Traditionally, a hobby group is a voluntary association of students for extracurricular activities in a subject or issue with the leadership of the teacher, who organized the independent work of students, distributed functions among them and gave the necessary instructions. Hobby groups of this type were created during the elimination of illiteracy campaign and were equated in status to schools for the illiterates, as mentioned in the governing documents, for example, in the “Typical regulations on groups for elimination of illiteracy in transport” (Central Administration for Transport Education, 1925, p. 31).

Illiteracy groups were set up at clubs, libraries, red corners, and trade unions. They were based on the principles of strict voluntariness, were part of a general network of groups and were subordinated either to higher trade union bodies or to the management of cultural and educational institutions. As a rule, the group included from 3 to 20 people.

Along with traditional educational groups with a qualified leader, due to the shortage of teaching staff, there were a large number of groups where it was not possible to count on the dominant role of the leader. These were mainly groups of working youth, who demonstrated greater activity and ability to work independently in literacy training compared to other categories of students.

The work of youth literacy groups was based on the principles of mutual assistance, when more knowledgeable group members acted as mentors and assistants to less trained members of the group. Youth groups were smaller in number and usually included no more than ten people. As a rule, these were young people who knew each other well, had an idea of the

amount of knowledge, abilities and working conditions of each of them, so they had the opportunity to work better, treat each other more carefully and provide appropriate assistance. The advantage of such groups was that the process of mastering literacy and mastering the material was more effective due to implementation of the principle of “when we teach, we learn”. Passing their knowledge to others, the members of the group better mastered the knowledge themselves and took a deeper approach to the issues under study (Krupskaya, 1959, p. 55).

In groups where there was no specialist leader, the organizational functions were performed by a headman or a secretary elected by the members of the group from among themselves. The headman was responsible for the work of the group. He organized and conducted classes, kept records of attendance, was in charge of providing the group with literature. He took care of creating the necessary living conditions. For methodological assistance, the headman applied to special counselling centres for the elimination of illiteracy, which existed in each district.

The system of work of consultants and the network of counselling centres was controlled by the bodies of the Main Political Education, the Extraordinary Commission for the Elimination of Illiteracy and the society “Down with illiteracy!”. These centres were permanent and provided oral advice and written explanations for school subjects’ groups, as well as methodological, organizational and logistical issues (Krupskaya, 1959, p. 58).

The group form of organization of adult education was mostly covered in the pedagogical works of Krupskaya (1959, p.656). Considering it as an important auxiliary form of organization of adult learning in the conditions of elimination of illiteracy, Krupskaya (1959, pp. 229-236) in the article “About the group work” justifies feasibility of organizing groups at the place of work of students, ensuring close connection between the content of education and production process, as well as the need for an active role of students themselves in the organization of the educational process: “The group form of education should be characterized by great flexibility, activity of group members, increased interest in this form of education, due to its direct connection with life practice, with its requests, due to complete freedom of choice of group classes and organization of the learning process by students themselves.

Krupskaya (1959, pp. 58-86) attached great importance to organization of self-educational work of adults and singled it out as an independent form of organization of education. The articles “Organization of self-education” and “Basic issues of self-education” set out the basics of organizing independent

classes for adults during literacy campaign, defined a system of control and methodological assistance in self-educational work of adults.

It should be noted that in the understanding of Krupskaya (1959, pp. 229-236) group, self-educational and individual forms of organization of education were closely related. For example, the self-educational work of adults could be built on the basis of group classes in special self-education groups, where individual classes with students were a mandatory part. Self-educational work could also be built on the basis of regular counselling of self-learning adults in methodical counselling centres.

#### **4. Research activities to improve the learning process in adult education institutions**

A. Karpov (2016) under the research activity to improve the learning process in educational institutions for adults explains the activity associated with the solution of a creative, research problem with an unknown solution in advance and providing for the main stages typical for research in the scientific field:

- problem formulation;
- study of the theory devoted to the problem;
- selection of research methods and practical mastery of them;
- collection of own material, its analysis and generalization;
- own conclusions.

Exploratory learning involves the researcher posing a problem to be solved, hypothesizing and proposing possible solutions to the problem, testing it, and drawing conclusions and generalizations based on the findings (Tolkanets, 2020).

The main point of educational research is that it is educational. This means that its main goal is personal development, rather than obtaining an objectively new result as in science. The purpose of research activity in education is to acquire research skills as a universal way of assimilating reality, to develop the ability to research type of thinking, to activate personal position in the educational process on the basis of acquisition of subjectively new knowledge.

Thus, independently obtained as a result of research or design and survey activities are new not for human culture, but for a particular person, that is personally significant. The main goal of this approach is to intensify learning by giving it an exploratory, creative character, transferring the initiative to students in creating their cognitive activity. Independent research practice is considered as the most important factor in the

development of creative abilities. The child or adult is placed in a situation where he or she masters concepts and problem-solving approaches on his or her own in a teacher-directed learning process (Engerman et al., 2020).

Exploratory learning is a process of students' independent cognition of the world around them through the study of its objects, processes and phenomena. According to M.V. Klarin, it is learning, in which the student finds himself in a situation where he himself masters the concept and finds an approach to solving problems in the process of cognition, to a greater or lesser extent organized (directed) by the teacher. In this case, not only learning knowledge, but also ways of research activity serve as the content of education. Learning and research activity is the solution of a creative, research task with a known unknown result, the purpose of which is to construct subjectively new knowledge by the student (Giacumo & Savenye, 2020).

The psychological basis of students' research activity is their exploratory activity, which is inherent in every person. Search activity, in turn, predetermines the research behavior. Research activity, unlike search activity and research behavior, is conscious and purposeful, involves the use of appropriate cultural tools (Gershunsky, 1988).

Exploratory behavior of a person does not manifest itself in typical life situations when solving standard life and professional problems. Searching nature of behavior is important when problem situations arise, when it is objectively impossible to solve the problem, to satisfy the need by habitual ways and means. The objective need for research behavior is relevant when there are new and complex tasks, when it is necessary to work with large amounts of heterogeneous information in real time, when intuition and creativity are required.

In doing so, a person can either change the problematic situation (make it problematic) or adapt to it. Since everyone is constantly confronted with a variety of domestic, professional and global problems, so relevant is the possession of the research method, search abilities or, as they say, research competence (Klarin, 1998).

The basis of research competence is research abilities (skills) that manifest themselves in research behavior: seeing problems, asking questions, hypothesizing, defining concepts, classifying, observing, conducting experiments, drawing conclusions, structuring material, explaining, proving and defending one's ideas.

## 5. Conclusions

Thus, in the research of the 1920s, in the conditions of fierce disputes, a wide range of organizational forms and methods of adult learning was identified and scientifically substantiated. The search for ways to improve them determined the main content of the then didactics for adults. The desire to enhance independence and activity of students themselves in acquiring knowledge, to teach them to learn; to abandon the former drilling, memorization, swotting, verbalism and move to cognition by observation, recognition and transformation of things, study of phenomena, independent work; not only to read a textbook and listen to the teacher, but also to look carefully, check, discover - such accents were manifested with great force in the development of methods and organizational forms of adult learning, which was new and fresh, but also characteristic of all Soviet didactics of the time.

It was found that in the period under study the use of the Dalton plan or laboratory plan became very popular, which in the pedagogical practice of the second half of the 1920s was transformed into a laboratory-brigade form of organization of the pedagogical process, which was used mostly in adult education. The laboratory plan has become first of all one of the methods of educational work within the classroom system of education, the main feature of which is greater independence and activity of students.

However, in the early 1930's, Soviet pedagogical science entered the next stage of its development. Its main content was, on the one hand, a critical understanding of the theoretical and practical experience of pedagogy in the 1920s, and, on the other hand, a change in the development of pedagogical science and school in connection with political processes in Soviet society and completion of building the Stalinist system.

In 1931-1936 a number of party resolutions were adopted, which regulated development of pedagogical science, sharply restricted freedom of discussion and introduced a strict ideological control throughout the education system (Central Committee of the CPSU, 1936, pp. 173-175). These resolutions defined the main directions of development of the educational system, the content of programs and textbooks, forms of organization and teaching methods; a course for a "decisive struggle against frivolous methodical hare-brained planning" was proclaimed (hare-brained planning - fascination with unfeasible projects - L.T.) (Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, 1931, p. 158). It was also argued that no method of teaching could be considered universal.

The main form of organization of the educational process is recognized as a classroom system, which combines collective and individual



forms of work under the guidance of a teacher. The main teaching methods were proclaimed oral presentation of material by the teacher, work on the textbook and book, independent written work, work in class, laboratory, training workshop, excursions and various demonstrations. A necessary condition for the effectiveness of all work was to be preparation of stable textbooks in all subjects (Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, 1933, p.164-165).

Thus, in the first half of the 1930's, government decrees formulated a program for development of the Soviet school and pedagogy, which defined their activities for a significant historical period.

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The author 2 presented in the article the methodological aspects of the organization of independent work of students through their performance of research tasks.

The author 3 proved that along with the traditional forms of organization of adult education were circles with a qualified leader, where the dominant role of the leader in the organization of independent research activities was counted.

The author 4 worked on editing the text of the article.

The author 5 selected and compiled a reference list of domestic scholars.

The author 6 selected and compiled a list of literature of foreign scientists.

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