

УДК 37.09.31-023.11(73):37(477)(045)

PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF PROFILE DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN THE UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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The authors described the current state of profile differentiated learning in Ukraine and highlighted promising directions for the introduction of elements of American differentiated learning into the national education system (to increase the individualization of education, pay greater attention to students' support in choosing a study profile, intensify the school's cooperation with parents, etc. The authors also admit that it is inappropriate to use foreign experience, without taking into account the specifics of the domestic education system.

Keywords: *specialized training; differentiated instruction; high school; American educational experience; specialized training conception; expediency of specialized training; implementation prospects; choosing an educational profile.*

ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО ДОСВІДУ ПРОФІЛЬНОЇ ДИФЕРЕНЦІАЦІЇ НАВЧАННЯ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ОСВІТНІЙ СИСТЕМІ

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Автори статті стисло охарактеризували сучасний стан профільного навчання в Україні, основні закономірності та поняття, існуючі проблеми, зробили аналіз попередніх досліджень та обґрунтували необхідність вивчення та запозичення позитивного досвіду економічно розвинених країн, таких як Сполучених Штатів Америки. У статті проаналізовано основні

здобутки у сфері профільного навчання (створення профілів навчання, врахування нахилів та інтересів учнів, спроби діагностування школярів з метою виявлення їхніх здібностей та нахилів, прийняття концепцій профільного навчання та інших важливих освітніх актів, введення висновки та НМТ тощо), досліджено спільне та відмінне у профільній диференціації навчання в Україні та США, виокремлено перспективні напрями впровадження елементів американського профільного навчання в національну освітню систему. Зокрема, автори вважають за доцільне посилити індивідуалізацію навчання, шукати шляхи розвантаження учнів від матеріалу, вивчення якого є не обов'язковим, вдосконалювати систему діагностування учнів, збільшити психологічну допомогу у виборі профілю навчання, зміцнювати матеріально-технічну базу, активізувати співпрацю школи з батьками учнів, розробити поради та інструкції для батьків школярів щодо того, як вони можуть підтримувати своїх дітей у цьому важливому виборі тощо. Також у статті наголошується про недоцільність використання іноземного досвіду без урахування специфіки вітчизняної системи освіти, історії її становлення, менталітету населення тощо. Важливо, що ефективне використання прогресивного досвіду успішних країн, запозичення освітніх програм, засобів, методів і форм навчання та елементів системи профільної диференціації навчання можливе лише за умови збереження вітчизняної спадщини та досягнень; тобто передача освітніх систем повинна відбуватися з умовою їх адаптації до систем держави-реципієнта.

Ключові слова: профільне навчання; диференціація навчання; старша школа; американський освітній досвід; концепція профільного навчання; доцільність профільного навчання; перспективи впровадження; вибір навчального профілю.

Scientists draw attention to the fact that there is a discrepancy between the modern development of science and society and the content and forms of education, which prompts the reform of the educational sphere in most countries and the search for the newest models of modern secondary educational institutions. Educators and methodologists are developing new teaching methods that would contribute to the growth of student activity in lessons and encourage the discovery of independent initiative in acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge. A student's educational activity should contribute to his / her self-realization, the development of natural gifts and interests, and even increase their number.

Educators all over the world have agreed that a person cannot be universal. Encyclopaedic education and comprehensive knowledge are not relevant in our time; they do not correspond to the pace of modern life. The rapid development of modern science, new requirements for working conditions require narrow specialization and earlier identification with a professional field. A person is obliged to start a meaningful life as early as possible, make a choice, and take responsibility for the future. Thanks to differentiated learning, a person can make a conscious choice of the future professional path, start an independent life earlier and become realized [2].

Unfortunately, despite the reforms in Ukraine, specialized training and the process of preparation for the future profession are still not perceived responsibly enough. It often happens that after finishing school, the choice of further educational institution (school, college or institution of higher education) is made without considering, in the last year of schooling or immediately after graduation. Sometimes it is simply difficult for students to figure out for themselves what they are inclined towards and what profession they can call their vocation. There are not rare cases when school graduates enter a certain educational institution at the request of their parents, while the inclinations, aptitudes and opinions of the entrants themselves are not taken into account.

A lot of work needs to be done to solve this problem: form a clear system of pre-professional and specialized education, involve parents in cooperation, regularly conduct

tests, surveys and apply various effective methods in order to help the student make the right, timely choice. It is important to study and implement the experience of other countries with successful education systems.

Thus, the exchange of experience is becoming a characteristic feature of the modern scientific and informational world; it is expedient to borrow the most progressive ideas that will lead to an improvement in the level of education and the material well-being of countries. This is evidenced by the fact that many countries support the concept, according to which, using the experience of positive education reform in individual countries, it is possible to create a standard model of the education and upbringing system, selecting only positive and progressive elements [4, p. 38].

Ukraine has recognized the need to use the positive experience of successful countries and is aware of the need to reform the education system and adapt it to the conditions of the 21st century. The problem of organizing specialized training of students in high school is important, and the United States of America has a positive experience of the functioning of the system of specialized differentiation of training of high school students, where this system is successful and time-tested.

Our state does not have enough experience in this area, high school has been functioning as a profile (specialized) school only since 2003, when the Conception of specialized training in high school was adopted, which is why special attention should be paid to the study of the history of the development and formation of profile (specialized) training in the USA, the educational system of which is one of the best. After all, the education system of a particular state, the process of its formation and character influence the development of socio-economic, political, national and cultural-historical features.

Ukraine and the USA have certain common features and separate trends in the process of profiling and differentiating the learning of high school students, even despite the uniqueness and specificity of this process in these countries, the different levels of its development and the fact that the United States of America has much more experience in the successful functioning of the system of differentiated learning of high school students.

In important modern educational documents, which are the Conception of profile (specialized) training in high school, approved in 2003, 2009, 2013 and 2021, it is noted that Ukraine is interested in and takes into account the peculiarities of the construction of the educational systems of the United States. However, Ukrainian educators and scientists only partially use the elements of foreign educational experience, the prospects for the implementation of such experience in Ukraine have not been fully studied, and especially the current state of differentiated learning in the USA, so there is a need for further research.

Respective Ukrainian researchers were engaged in the study of the problem of profile differentiated learning, among them H. Avchinnikova, O. Karpyuk, O. Kobernyk, V. Kutsenko, L. Lypova, O. Lokshyna, V. Malyshev, V. Morgun, M. Shutova et al. (problems of specialized education, analysis of its goals, perspectives, options and contradictions, its prospects; the role of specialized education in the process of transforming “school-training” into “school-life”; methods of long-term and tested clarification of the inclinations and aptitudes of each student, who chooses a profile or profession).

In particular, in her monograph, H. Avchinnikova characterizes the formation and current state of specialized education in the American high school, suggests ways of borrowing progressive experience into the domestic educational system [1].

O. Kobernyk, N. Bezlyudna, and V. Boychenko in the textbook “Pedagogy of a profiled (specialized) school” analyze the current state of specialized education in Ukraine and study the possibilities of using the positive American experience [3].

O. Lokshyna devoted a number of her works to the study of the current state of differentiated learning of American high school students and has certain valuable achievements that are worthy of attention [4].

The profiling of learning was also studied by N. Beskova, M. Bosenko, M. Burda, T. Hilberg, P. Dziavoruk, S. Dyatlenko, B. Zhebrovskiy, R. Zubyak, O. Yeresko, A. Ilyenko, I. Kozina, H. Lomakovska, V. Lugovii, V. Meleshko, O. Rudyakov, H. Stashenko, O. Topuzov, O. Udod, L. Shestakivskiy, and others. The interest of teachers and scientists indicates the relevance and importance of the problem. Therefore, we believe that the Ukrainian general secondary education system as a whole and the system of profile differentiated learning require rethinking and new evaluations of the experience of the American school organization and the use of positive aspects in domestic practice, avoiding shortcomings and miscalculations. That is why it is necessary to continue the study and ways of realizing new possibilities of borrowing the American progressive experience.

Conception development is only the first step towards a specialized (profiled) school. The following are next in line: the development of relevant regulatory documents, standard curricula, programs, textbooks, and most importantly, the preparation of school leaders for its implementation and teachers for teaching subjects at the professional level. All this is of primary importance at the current stage, Ukraine must prepare for a real transition to a profiled (specialized) school, and the foreign experience of introducing profile differentiated learning in senior classes will be extremely useful. Therefore, in our study, we aim to find out the prospects of implementing the American experience of differentiated learning in the Ukrainian educational system.

First, let's briefly consider the main achievements that Ukraine has in the field of differentiated learning of high school students. Significant achievements in the process of optimizing the education of high school students are the creation of profiled (specialized) classes in schools in grades 9–11 (12) and the teaching of certain subjects at the specialized level, the approval of the standard of general education, the introduction of a single state exam – ZNO (independent external evaluation), the development of a two-level ZNO to be taken by students at the end of the 11 (12)th grade: the “standard” level and the “advanced” level. Also, since war in Ukraine, politics and educators have worked hard to provide quality of education and not to lose the obtained results NMT (independent external evaluation for 3 subjects in 1 exam) has been introduced in 2022 and 2023 years.

The modern national model of a comprehensive school with profiled (specialized) training at the senior level provides for the possibility of various combinations of educational subjects, which provides a fairly flexible system of differentiated learning (although it has certain disadvantages). This system includes 3 types of educational subjects – basic general education, specialized and elective. Basic general education subjects are mandatory for all students in all study profiles.

The conceptions of differentiated learning in high school, adopted in 2013 and 2019, are of particular importance for the development of national general education, elements of the developed countries' experience have been studied, adapted to our traditions and realities, and the proposals of leading educators were taken into account [3].

Next significant achievements have been made: flexibility both in the organization of profile training and in the possibilities of changing it, training according to the child's wishes in two profiles at once; significant expansion of school autonomy; the opportunity to receive a state-style document on the acquisition of a profession together with the certificate; taking into account the principles of inclusive education; increasing the role of psychological support of pre-professional training and professional training.

An important feature of the new Conception is the introduction of the optional course "Professional tests". It will enable high school students not only to theoretically master the chosen profile, but also to "touch" in practice specific professions related to this profile (this course has been in effect in US schools for a long time. Therefore, graduates will more consciously choose their future profession. A plus is that even in the absence of students to form a class; profile (specialized) training can be implemented according to individual plans. In addition, the principle of flexibility makes it possible to change the training profile. The Conception, on the one hand, contains a rigidly fixed list of mandatory disciplines, and on the other hand, it allows you to choose educational subjects from the proposed list. That is, the ratio of invariant and variable components is optimized in favour of the latter. It is especially worth noting such forms as dynamic profile groups, profile training according to individual educational plans, interschool profile groups, educational district, and socio-pedagogical association. These are exactly the models that will make it possible to ensure the effectiveness of specialized training in rural areas, where classes are mostly small, etc. Thus, the new Conception (2020), like the previous two, took into account the peculiarities of the rural school. However, the new Conception presents the process of interaction of different types of educational institutions, which are considered at the inter-school and network levels, more broadly.

Fundamental changes in Ukrainian system of education should begin in 2027, when the start of a radically updated secondary education is planned. The reform of profiled (specialized) training is one of the components of the formation of the New Ukrainian School.

The Conception of profiled (specialized) training provides for certain conditions that will ensure the transition to specialized training in general educational institutions. After successfully completing the 9th grade, a high school student can choose an academic or professional direction for further study, which is provided by the specialized school.

Under the academic direction, 10th grade students will have the opportunity to change their educational profile during the year, and high school students are also provided with wide autonomy in choosing academic subjects and subject difficulty levels.

In the document "On the approval of the Strategy for the development of higher education in Ukraine for 2022–2032", the Minister of Education and Science S. Shkarlet noted that despite the war and the difficult situation in Ukraine, the main task is to continue the educational process and reform the education system in accordance with new challenges. This strategic document, focused on Ukraine's accession to the European Union, defines the main priorities of education at the current stage of the development of society and the country's economy, as well as the main characteristics that will be formed by 2032.

We believe that studying the successful experience of the transition from a high school to a specialized school will provide an opportunity to reach the level of the developed countries, and even become leaders in some aspects. Next, we offer to analyse the aspects that should be taken into account and in the future could be borrowed from American colleagues.

An important role is played by the American National Council on Skills Standards for implementing an evaluation procedure for 15 sectors of the economy. Professional training of teachers is controlled by professional associations that effectively cooperate with consulting firms, charitable foundations, and non-profit organizations. They form a database of educational programs and, determining the degree of compliance of these programs with production requirements, carry out their accreditation [3].

Funding of the system of differentiated learning of schoolchildren should be reviewed in Ukraine. Having considered and compared the costs of education, we conclude that the USA invests more money in the education system than other developed European countries. B. Obama noted that "...saving on the quality of education is like throwing an engine out of a falling plane. It will be easier for a moment, but the fall is inevitable". Investments in education will definitely pay off and raise the country's economy to a higher level.

It is necessary to intensify the cooperation of teachers and school administration with parents of students. It is worth paying attention to how deeply in the USA the school cooperates with the students' families, parents are constantly involved in the educational and extracurricular activities of their children. In Ukraine, unfortunately, very often the cooperation of parents with the school is limited to attending parent meetings or solving organizational issues. Americans already have extremely valuable developed plans and guidelines for what exactly parents should do; how they can best support their children and help them make the right career choices. One such plan for parents is by the American school Cape Central High School. It contains detailed information on what tests and assessments are taken in high school, what needs to be done for a child to successfully pass them, as well as recommendations on how to prepare for choosing a further educational institution. This is extremely important because every step is clear and increases the possibility that students, together with their parents, will make one of the most important choices in life.

Paying attention to non-standard forms of training organization when implementing training profiling will help make it more effective. The implementation in senior classes of the principles of profile differentiation of education with personal orientation of education, when the student is at the centre of the educational process, requires the use of the latest technologies, changes in forms and methods of education: multimedia educational projects of creative and informational directions; use of thematic TV programs; use of television and computer didactic games in lessons, etc. [4].

Americans believe that teaching methods are one of the main structural components of the educational process. Bringing the activities of schoolchildren to the forefront due to the introduction of the principles of professional differentiation of learning has changed the role of teaching methods in US schools. The teacher's story-explanation occupies a rather insignificant place in the educational process. The basis of the methodology in American secondary educational institutions is a conversation with the condition that all participants are equal, have the ability to listen patiently, treat each other with respect, and take into account each other's opinions. Next to the conversation, the method of questions and answers is used. American teachers use this method widely, because it helps them to find out what is unclear or difficult for teenagers. And while the American school testing system has been heavily criticized, it continues to be used in all subjects.

It is positive that American high school students use different ways of finding and learning educational material: they use dictionaries, reference books, various periodicals,

other sources of libraries and scientific centres and Internet resources, visit institutions, organizations, enterprises, conduct conversations with specialists.

Comparing the selection of forms and methods for the optimal organization of the system of profile differentiated learning in Ukraine and the USA, we can conclude that our domestic teachers are in no hurry to change the usual traditional approaches in this matter. If American high school students are offered to find material by their own efforts, prepare a project, talk with specialists, visit organizations, asking and solving various questions, then Ukrainians are commonly offered a lecture – passive perception of the material by ear, at desks, when the teacher stands in the middle of the class, the method of questions and answers with this is not common. Although there is already a noticeable trend towards diversifying the educational process in Ukrainian high schools. The project method begins to gain popularity, work in small groups and other new forms and methods are slowly being used, teachers are encouraged to conduct non-standard lessons, because then high school students perceive and assimilate the educational material much better, and traditional passive forms of organization of education, which are better cater to a teacher-centred rather than student-centred type of learning.

The American system of specialized education is aimed at revealing and fully developing the potential of each student, who will be able to fully realize himself / herself in the chosen field and achieve high results. The success of each teenager contributes to the success of the entire American nation. Therefore, Ukraine should also pay attention to improving the qualifications of teachers, acquaint them with the latest forms and methods of teaching that are focused on schoolchildren and their interests, encourage the use of these forms and methods, and activate the exchange of pedagogical experience.

Improving the quality of material and technical support will contribute to the optimization of the profile differentiated learning. A big plus is that in the USA, young people go to high school well-versed with computers and computer technology since childhood, so high school students have free access to modern computers and the Internet. In the educational process, the computer is used to search for information, perform or check homework, test tasks, write works, or for self-testing. In the USA, the computer is not only a means of learning; it acquires the functions of an organizer of the educational process.

Video and television are also actively used in American classrooms. An important point is to acquaint high school students with the political situation in their native country and in the world, so schoolchildren watch the news for half an hour in the classroom and analyse various political events at once, sometimes they arrange debates, conversations or use the question and answer method. Politics is not an easy thing, young people often become puppets in the political game, that is why it is so important in high school that students can already evaluate this or that political situation. After watching various educational video materials (documentary or feature films, videos about people, nature, art), a discussion takes place. Educational videos in the classroom help teachers and make their work easier. And television studios (which exist in many high schools) provide ample opportunities for mastering the profession of a reporter, announcer, cameraman, and are a model of modern education. In some schools of Ukraine, they try to introduce the discussion of political information after getting acquainted with political events before the lessons, but often this type of activity is not given enough attention.

The high level of equipping classrooms and schools in general with modern technical

means is of great importance in the implementation of the principles of profile differentiated learning of US high school students. Classrooms should meet their needs and help the teacher in his/her work. Every classroom in Ukraine should also have the necessary technical equipment and a variety of video materials from all disciplines, which will contribute to a better perception and assimilation of the educational material and help the teacher in organizing the starting time.

There are many cases of positive experience of borrowing education systems in general, reforms or individual educational elements from one state to another (the USA at the beginning of its formation also actively borrowed and used the pedagogical experience of other countries). However, the transfer of foreign experience is not always successful; therefore the primary task is the study, research and analysis of historical, social, economic, geographical and other conditions. We should not forget that the education system of each country is a unique model, and therefore the mechanical borrowing of foreign experience is unpromising and even harmful for other countries [1–4].

The national program “Education – Ukraine of the 21st century” also states that the specifics of national education when using the pedagogical experience of other countries should remain in the first place. That is why it is important to achieve an agreement between the preservation of Ukrainian heritage and achievements and the effective use of the progressive experience of successful countries, the borrowing of educational programs, means, methods, forms of education and elements of the system of profile differentiation of education. If necessary, the transfer of educational systems should also take place with the condition of adapting them to the systems of the recipient state.

Profile differentiated learning involves individualization of education and adaptation of students to market and social requirements. During the educational activities of high school students, attention is paid to their interests, wishes, abilities and inclinations, conditions are created for the harmonious full-fledged development of schoolchildren, which corresponds to their cognitive and professional intentions. Differentiated learning does not involve preparation for one or another specialty or profession, but only preparation for activities in which it is possible to apply knowledge of the subject area.

The study of the works on the mentioned topic helps to find out that the advantage of the profile differentiated learning in the USA is the focus on individuality, and not on the mass, which benefits not only the student, but also the team. Profile differentiated learning enables students to make their own choices already at school, assess their own capabilities, learn to make decisions and plan their education and professional career.

Differentiating the education of high school students creates positive psychological conditions, ensures greater interest and engagement of students during class time. In Ukraine, the system of differentiation must be brought to a qualitatively new level by introducing different forms of education and taking into account modern methodological systems and learning technologies. It is necessary to look for effective ways of introducing specialized differentiated education, to determine the principles of selecting high school students in differentiated classes, and to plan a system of interest of high school students in choosing appropriate profiles.

Therefore, the analysis of the system of profile differentiated learning of high school students in the United States provides grounds for identifying promising directions for the introduction of elements of the American experience into the national educational system. So

in our article we define main prospects of implementing the American experience of differentiated learning in the Ukrainian educational system:

- more effective implementation of pre-professional training in high school;
- conducting a thorough diagnosis of high school students in order to determine their interests, inclinations and preferences for choosing a study profile in senior classes;
- optimizing the school's cooperation with students' parents, providing information on how exactly they can support their child in choosing a direction of study and a further educational institution;
- creating a “guidance” service in schools (that will deal with issues of the field of study choice, additional courses and electives, will help schoolchildren and their parents to make the right choice of further educational institution and solve other organizational and educational issues) etc.

We believe that it would be appropriate to study the current state of the profile differentiated learning of US high school students, to be interested in the latest achievements and goals of American students, in order to gain awareness of global educational trends and analyze the feasibility of introducing such experience into the Ukrainian educational system.

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