

PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF SECOND CHANCE ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract

In order to make the implementation of second chance education feasible, it is crucial to understand its socio-educational and philosophical foundations. This study focuses on the analysis of the key pillars that form the basis of alternative school education. Recognition of its philosophical perspectives is the starting point for integrating second chance education into educational systems. By giving adults a new chance to learn and develop their skills and personal development, it is possible to enhance the demonstration of their humanity, regardless of social background or previous experience. The submitted article aims to understand second chance education's transformative potential in relevant contexts. The object of this study is to provide a theoretical overview of the current state of empirical research on philosophical and socio-educational perspectives of second chance education.

Key words

adult second chance education, early school leaving, social andragogy, alternative school education, low-qualified adults

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Introduction

A significant heterogeneity within the target group itself marks second chance education. Teaching and learning in this context should be rooted in a comprehensive understanding of individual differences among non-traditional adult learners to effectively prevent recurring conditions and situations that lead to dropping out of the formal education system. It is essential to view the educational process in this unique field holistically. Second chance education cannot be implemented superficially to meet the standards for awarding a formal output from adult education. We perceive alternative school education in broader philosophical and social-educational contexts. These contexts provide us with a comprehensive framework for understanding the goals, values, and principles underpinning second chance education. The analysis of the philosophical aspects of this specific type of education forms the basis for successfully implementing the concepts of second chance education in educational systems worldwide.

The review study is directed towards the analysis of selected relevant sources that deal with the significant determinants of second chance education, especially in relation to the philosophical perspectives of this specific type of adult education. We also identify selected socio-educational perspectives on second chance education and seek to describe key aspects of professional discourse in the context of its implementation.

The literature review in this study seeks to answer the questions we formulate as follows:

1. What findings emerge from research carried out in international contexts that are aimed at understanding the key determinants in the field of second chance education?
2. What philosophical and socio-educational perspectives reflect current approaches to second chance education?

We use a neutral approach to interpretation of the results. We focus on learning about specifics that appear to be relevant in relation to conducting further research in this area. By collecting and synthesizing the professional outcomes, we aim to recognize those that we consider optimal in relation to the effective realization of second chance education.

1 Philosophical aspects of the constitution of second chance education

or this specific kind of education, a sharp distinction between the entity objectively given and the existential entity of the always unique person is crucial. In existentialist philosophy, the human entity is characterised by the fact that it cannot be understood as a case of a species that is given to us objectively. An existential human entity can be authentic, but there is also the possibility of losing an authentic being. Thus, there is the possibility of being or not being what we are (Slosiar, 2002, In Forgac, 2014). In reflecting on the acceptance of the ideas in question, it is desirable to acknowledge the need to activate the participants of the second chance education in such a way that they take responsibility for their lives. Several factors influence the decision to participate in, remain in, or drop out of second chance education. These factors often act as barriers that limit the degree of self-initiative of participants. In such a case, the educational intervention could meet the needs of the formal curricular aspects of second chance education and also adult learners' personal dispositions and social needs. We intend to enhance the ability to make informed and responsible decisions concerning learning and life realities.

Second-chance mechanisms are frequently illustrated through a comparative lens involving general and vocational education programs that emphasize holistic personal development in adulthood. The necessity for the noncognitive development of the adult learner is explicitly stated (Paniagua Rodriguez, 2022).

Unlike standard school education, second chance education focuses on the experiences of the participants themselves. Different life experiences represent the need for a differentiated approach to the learning process. A partner and helping relationship can replace the directive and controlled approach. Subsequently, it is possible to use the participants' individual dispositions to increase the effectiveness and outcomes of this education. Adults return to the education system primarily to enhance their knowledge, seek new employment opportunities, or advance their current job positions. The promotion of human potential development through education is recognized as a critical factor for sustainable economic growth at the national level (Sokolova, Mohelska, 2015).

Existentialism is characterised precisely by its openness to experience. Reality depends on human experience and determines a relatively stable value ladder. Accepting experience as the supreme authority means orienting

all educational activities towards experiential learning. One cannot rely on spontaneous situations. It is crucial to facilitate experiences by creating a new space for the learner to discover a specific value (Luptakova, 2007).

The value anchoring of education is particularly relevant concerning the specific target group of second chance education. The low value they place on education may represent an additional non-institutional barrier we need to remove at the intrapersonal level of individuals. In particular, Lukacova (2014) defines the group of people with no or low levels of education in the system of second chance education mainly as:

- members of socially excluded Roma communities,
- the unemployed people registered at the labour offices,
- convicted prisoners serving a prison sentence.

We perceive the indisputable need to enable education's axiological dimension in this context. Bar-Haim, Blank (2019) indicate that practitioners and relevant policymakers primarily focus their attention on the evaluation of second-chance programs. They exhibit limited concern for the wider context of inequality in educational opportunities.

Another urgent aspect is the need participant's reflection based on specific problems related to the progress and development of society. Personalism is not only oriented towards humanity but also towards the principles that underlie and condition humanity. Qualitatively oriented research in the field of second chance education always concerns that emphasising the results of empirical sciences represents an impoverishment of the perception of the human person in its anthropological breadth and dimension of human life (Plasienkova, 2014). We need to know these determinants through the lens of each participant's unique, individual, and non-transferable experience in second chance education or those interested in such studies. The diverse reasons for dropping out of the formal education system are so specific that it is not appropriate to quantify them.

We consider the personality of the participant of second chance education as unique and unrepeatable. Then, each member of society should not act to the outside world as a passive consumer but as an active creator of values. Second chance education makes it possible to enrich the social environment with human capital, which is oppressed or wholly ignored in standard conditions. In addition to the more significant economic benefits that adults with higher qualifications generate, education acts as a prevention against socio-pathological phenomena, tends to increase social cohesion, strengthens health literacy and enables active civic participation.

In such a context, it is possible to speak of personalism, or certain personality centrism, in which each personality is a unique universe. It always integrates the larger whole in a particular way. Above all, we allow all people to elevate themselves in the act of free and authentic creation while recognising the value of each personality. No human being can be deprived of the responsibility for realising their own creative possibilities and obliviousness to fate because they belong to a subjectively perceived less perfect culture (Letz, 2004, s. 35). Pikkarainen et al. (2021) examined the experiences of school dropouts and identified risk situations associated with early school leaving.

1. Accumulated frustration resulting from unmet needs.
2. Accumulated frustration that developed in a context of interrelated factors.
3. A perception of security threat arising from accumulated frustration.

For teachers working in second chance schools to be able to work with this specific group of learners, they need to undergo systematic training forms of education. It is tough for standard teachers not to judge a second chance learner through the lens of their own, often distorted, beliefs. The problem arises in their undergraduate preparation when they are not or only partially prepared for educational work with adults and not at all with menaced or marginalised learners of second chance education. Teachers do not have the training to manage interpersonal conflict among adults, to interact in a specific form with this target group, and they do not employ a deposit of methods, techniques and approaches significantly different from those used when working with standard learners.

An essential factor is understanding the thinking of participants from other cultures and purifying one's thinking from judging them through the values and standards of one's culture. Through the prism of poststructuralism, one's own category enters into any attempt to describe social reality, and in doing so, we are co-creating it. Among other things, all existing structures must have evolved from something that came before them. Even the starting point of development itself must be structured. The absence of the original starting feature leads to doubts about the possibility of the sciences of culture and society (Mentel, 2015). Finally, openness concerning the inclusive approach in second chance schools becomes relevant. There is no homogenous and universally valid concept of working with adult non-standard students. The key is not to recognise their diversity's variability but to apply a student-centred approach. The study conducted by Martins et al. (2020) examined perspectives on the reintegration of individuals into the school system following their return through second chance programs. The findings indicate that participation in these programs significantly enhances commitment to education and leads to notable positive outcomes, including the development of learners' personalities and the correction of their behaviors.

For this reason, the scientific research exploration of second chance learners most often occurs through a qualitative paradigm. We assume that the aspects of individuality and special consideration are so dominant that it is impossible to capture them in any other way. The emphasis is on understanding the participant's actions, reasoning, ideas and beliefs, which are unique in each case and each circumstance.

Deconstructionists reject the possibility of scientific objectivity. In such a conception, the governed subject is destroyed by objectivity, and the governing subject is contaminated by its very being, without which, paradoxically, it would be incapable of its own existence. The main contribution of this way of thinking is to concentrate on analysing the laws of thought, history and culture. Deconstructivism points to the illusory nature of an understanding of the world that does not deal with the assumption that our being is affected by two contradictory tendencies: destruction and construction (Pokrivcak, 2020). We equally perceive the issue of second

chance education in the light of both opposites, dropping out of the formal education system and then subsequent reintegration into this system.

Early dropping out of the formal education system is itself a phenomenon that affects different social groups differently. We should understand it as a central determinant of ensuring social justice. A necessary step is to identify each individual's needs and problems. Recognising these specificities is crucial in successfully implementing measures to ensure equality of opportunity in the educational area. The issue of early school leaving is currently being addressed in scientific research in the context of socio-economic determinants, institutional risks and individual adaptability by a number of authors (e.g. Brown et al., 2021; Savvides et al., 2021; Bühler-Niederberger et al., 2022; Pikkarainen et al., 2021). The study by Savelsberg et al. (2017) indicates that adult learners recognize the significance of acquiring practical employability skills, alongside their personal development, the presence of social support, and the availability of supportive learning environments.

Phenomenology operates with the assumption that the natural world of the student is ignored and confined to his theorised world, to scientism. For these reasons, scientific cognition closes itself off and fails to capture the raw essence of matters. Abstract and strictly idealised rules suppress complexity and the sense of understanding the world as a whole. Concerning second chance education, phenomenology allows us to explore its specific determinants as complex aspects of human existence that cannot be reduced, narrowed or generalised. In this context, the learners should shape and form their unique personalities, build their identities, and assume new positions in life. Naturally, they have to leave the stereotype (Exner, 2019). We want to highlight the broader social connections between second chance education, personal engagement and human participation in society.

The education of convicts in prison is a specific area of focus. Stickle and Schuster (2023) conducted a meta-analysis to assess the effects of education for adult convicts on their subsequent life outcomes and the economic returns associated with investment in educational programs. Significant reductions in recidivism following release from imprisonment were positively correlated with improved employability and higher salaries.

We see the importance of exploring the inner world of the second chance learner at the level of opening up the world of values that guide and influence the learner's decisions to participate and remain in the course of study. However, guiding educational work becomes dominant and acts as the target idea. It is vital to place the participants at the centre of the educational process and to respect their individual nature (Krankus, 2010).

Both exogenous and endogenous factors that condition adult learners' behaviour and actions need to be researched as potential barriers to participation in second chance education. In phenomenology, there are considerations that if science returns to its original sources and meanings for everyday life in the natural world, the scientific inquiry process can be more rewarding. We can speak of phenomenological non-reduction, where we abandon our natural perception of the world and make favourable and

objectively valid judgments about something given to us beforehand (Ondrejko, 2016).

Hermeneutics reflects the necessity of understanding the participants of second chance education. Knowing the individual and social cues that inform relevant interactions with the outside world is crucial. Conceptualising education as a broader concept of social-educational care can benefit the socialisation of low-educated adults. The provision of this form of care can significantly influence the development and activation of this target group.

One sees the background of a meaningful whole, which gives our encounters with things, people or relationships a specific dimension of understanding through the lens of our individual perspective, which we can control. We become humans precisely by understanding the world surrounding us and other people and social meanings. However, uncovering the meaning of things is only possible in cooperation with others (Polackova, 2001). Participants in second chance education naturally expect confirmation of their self-concept and may request feedback. The teachers should direct their actions towards enhancing participants' self-acceptance.

Teaching centred on the student's experience can be a protective factor against dropping out of the school education system again. Relating the experience to the learning content contributes to retaining second chance students in the school system. Thus, specific experience-oriented and autonomy-activating teaching strategies are required.

We assume that in the process of identity formation, other people also play a significant role in shaping the context of a person's life. It is possible to focus on exploring the nature of human narrative experience (Vankova, 2017). Every experience depends on both congruent and incongruent elements that can benefit the effectiveness and outcomes of education or, conversely, they lead to repeated failures of adults for whom the standard school environment does not suit them for various reasons.

2 Socio-educational perspectives on the return to the formal education system

The recognition of the uniqueness of each person and the demands for an individual approach in the process of (not only) second chance education and the activation of each member of society is based mainly on postmodern individualism. We currently perceive the disengagement of a specific part of the population, social exclusion and its adverse factors (e.g., higher unemployment, deepening inequalities in social stratification) as one of the primary challenges of andragogy and other sciences or helping professions.

However, it is impossible to convert any personal entity into some universal personal code that encompasses the personal codes of all people at a higher developmental and being level. The more perfect a personal community is, the more its members are affirmed in their uniqueness. The exception is the case of the involution of human society when the interiority and spirituality of human individuals disappear, and there is a disintegration of the community associated with the individualising segregation of its members (Letz, 2001). Thus, the area of implementation strategies is crucial. The individual approach and the principles of appropriateness cannot be placed solely on the process of second chance education but also on the whole range

of support measures and plans to encompass all the necessary social groups as potential participants in this unique kind of education.

Individualism as a moral principle refers to its primary function, proposing a model of society, a specific view of how society should function and how individuals should live in it. All human beings can make something of their own life. Ethical individualism claims that every individual human life is sacred in this sense (Dworkin, 1994, In Vančíková, 2013).

According to Rajský (2021), education combines two different and inextricably linked processes. The first component is conformity, which is particularly significant in the socialisation of the participants in second chance education. It disposes of the possibilities of their integration into society and its culture and conveys norms, patterns and thinking models. Formativity, as the second aspect of this inseparable relationship, is related to the personalisation of accompanying the participant in second chance education. The learners' autonomous processes suppress the controlling subject's dominant role. Second chance education should facilitate the process of becoming oneself and acquiring one's shape, including caring for one's development and spiritual formation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a comprehensive literature review has been conducted to address the formulated questions regarding second chance education. This study synthesizes findings from international research, examining various philosophical and socio-educational perspectives to identify key determinants in the field. The neutral interpretation facilitated the identification of the thinking behind the research trends and application dimensions of second chance initiatives.

Currently, the field of second chance education research focuses on a number of key strands that reflect the growing interest in inclusive educational approaches and adult personal development. These trends suggest that future research will address a number of key issues and questions. One major aspect is the integration of second chance education into existing education systems. It is important to explore how to effectively embed these programs into traditional educational structures, and an analysis of successful approaches to second chance education may contribute to their effective praxeological implementation. Philosophical and ethical issues also play a key role. With regard to the foundations of second chance education, other research has focused on issues of equity and access to education, taking into account different social groups and their individual needs. Psychological and social factors are another important topic that research must necessarily address. Examining these aspects can reveal how they affect the success of the participants. Measuring and evaluating the impact of second chance education also becomes an essential aspect of research to help assess its long-term impact on individuals and communities. Research in the field of second chance education is responding to dynamic social and economic changes, seeking to deepen and understand its complexity and potential to change the lives of individuals and society as a whole.

Acceptance of the principles of equality, inclusion and the right to a second chance education enables those concerned to confront inequalities in different areas of life. According to Rajskey (2021), many approaches and theories of continental philosophy (especially existentialism and personalism, poststructuralism and deconstructivism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and others) predictably intervene in the construction of educational thinking, which we have also described in this paper in our reflection on the current form of second chance education. In recent years, the recognition of the importance of second chance education in the context of lifelong learning and sustainable development has increased. However, it is crucial to base this catalyst for progress on analysing the philosophical and socio-educational determinants of the return to formal education to grasp the nature and orientation of second chance education from the perspective of both society and the adult learner.

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