

**icCSBs 2020****The Annual International Conference on Cognitive - Social, and Behavioural  
Sciences****TEACHER'S PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTING  
"WINNETKA PLAN": WASHBURNE'S LESSONS FOR MODERN  
PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION**

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legion7272@mail.ru***Abstract***

The outstanding American educationist Carleton Wolsey Washburne (1889–1968), seeking to overcome the shortcomings of traditional education, following the logic of advanced reformist education of his time and pursuing the goals of the pedo-centric revolution in education that gained momentum at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was confronted with the problem of creating conditions that would enable every schoolchild to master the material envisaged by the curriculum. To accomplish that task he set up a unique model of individualized education called the Winnetka Plan. The school curriculum comprised two autonomous parts: knowledge and skills known as “common essentials”, and incentivizing creative group activities. Organizing school activities involves a wide spectrum of tasks which call for serious reflection and timely and adequate solution. Washburne assigned to the teacher the leading role in the study of the problem field of school education and the search for answers to the eternal questions “what to teach?” and “how to teach?” In developing his original model of instruction, Washburne was profoundly convinced “the new school” needed a teacher who understands and accepts all the specificities and features of the Winnetka Plan. With the child at the center of the educational space, the teacher needed a totally new baggage: new competences, effective methodologies, a degree of research and experimental skills, initiative and flexibility. The article presents the talented educationist’s experience in preparing the teacher for work at child-centered schools.

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**Keywords:** Carleton Washburne, the Winnetka Plan, rational reconstruction method, historical reconstruction method, pedagogical education, the use of pedagogical experience.

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## 1. Introduction

Carleton Washburne is a personality widely known in the world educational space. He was an outstanding trail-blazing, deeply thoughtful educationist who sought to extend the frontiers of knowledge and creative search. Appointed to oversee public school in Winnetka (Illinois, USA) in May 1919, Washburne set about implementing an original model of a dualist type.

School classes were based on the approach developed by Edward Thorndike, one of the founders of behaviorism, in 1890s-1910s. Classes were organized in a way that anticipated the programmed instruction technology. Every schoolchild had an individual learning trajectory within a common curriculum using self-learning materials developed by Winnetka teachers. This trajectory was divided into successive steps which could only be made after successfully taking the preceding steps. The individualized model of instruction enabled each child to master the program at an accessible rate.

All extra-mural work with schoolchildren was organized on the basis of John Dewey's progressivist pedagogy with the use of the project methods developed in the 1910s by William Kirkpatrick which stressed the cooperative ability of children, their communication competence, and enabled them to implement the search method in mastering the realities of human culture and the surrounding world on the basis of a systemic involvement of children in group project activities.

The introduction of the Winnetka Plan revealed a serious problem, i.e. the preparedness of faculty for work under new conditions where the teacher's successful professional upgrading depended on his/her activity, mobility, independence, creativity, psychological flair and the ability to organize various types of student activities, free of dogmatic thinking and taught to reflect (Rogacheva, 2005), to correctly translate theoretical knowledge into personal knowledge of methods to accomplish educational tasks. Washburne was not satisfied with the traditional approach to organizing professional development of teachers required to implement the Winnetka Plan of improving the conditions for an all-round development and for revealing the potential of each child. Washburne (1920) made significant efforts, as witnessed by his managerial decisions, for example, the introduction of the Graduated Salary Schedule (Washburne, 1920), which, on the one hand, relieved tensions, disgruntlement, complaints of injustice among teachers, and on the other hand, stimulated teachers to grow professionally and to seek to improve the entire process of study and character training. It also created the necessary conditions for the use of new ways of organizing the work of teachers, improve school plant and develop an innovative infrastructure. Along with traditional upgrading courses he introduced Summer School, regular study of peer experience in and outside the country (educational trips) and the participation of every teacher in experimental and research activities that formed the innovative nucleus of the Winnetka Plan.

## 2. Problem Statement

Carleton Washburne's system of preparing the teacher for implementing the Winnetka Plan shows how teachers can be prepared to work using various pedagogical technologies simultaneously (methodology of projects and programmed teaching).

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1.** How can Washburne's experience of training teachers to work under the Winnetka Plan be used in modern pedagogical education?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

To reconstruct and actualize Washburne's experience of training teachers to implement the Winnetka Plan to update the theory and practice of modern pedagogical education.

### **5. Research Methods**

The methods of rational and historical reconstruction of pedagogical reality of the past developed by R. Rorty in the book *The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres* (Rorty, 1984) which permit, on the one hand, to adequately reproduce the system of training teachers for work under the Winnetka Plan and on the other hand, to adapt its experience to the solution of the problems of modern pedagogical education.

### **6. Findings**

Reconstruction of the model of preparing the teacher for working simultaneously in the mode of pedagogical activity which permits to radically individualize the teaching process, take into account to the maximum degree the individual traits and potential of each student, and effectively organize the joint activity of the students and successfully develop their communication skills.

The Winnetka Plan is interpreted as an educational tool that enables school teachers to effectively accomplish educational tasks formulated on the basis of differing and indeed opposite approaches to the child's development.

Washburne wrote: "From the beginning we recognized in Winnetka, as all must recognize, that good teachers are the key to good education" (Washburne & Marland, 1963, p. 123). Schools sought to employ highly qualified specialists and those "who were the kind of educated human beings whom we should want to associate with children and who could command the liking and respect of parents (Washburne & Marland, 1963). Experienced teacher mentors helped the newly hired teachers to prepare for classes, involved them in research work, organized conferences and seminars, arranged regular meetings and consultations where a new education system was born and developed, wrote textbooks for independent study, developed diagnostic tests and a philosophy of individualized learning" (Rogacheva, 2015, p. 143).

Winnetka schools were educational laboratories where new methods were tested and the results of these methods were thoroughly taken into account (Washburne, 1930). Three teacher associations were created engaged in regular experimental and research activities: the grade groups, the research seminar, and the special research workers (Washburne, 1924) and The Department of Educational Research. Research covered various activities, the details of experimental work changed from year to year, even from month to month as scientific understanding of the education process was enhanced to embrace practically the entire faculty. Involvement in a new type of activity encouraged teachers to adopt a

scientific approach, fostering their perseverance, sense of purpose and diligence. They gradually grew into excellent research workers. An analysis of many years of work reported in more than 100 published papers, gives an idea of the scale and depth of experiments in organizing individualized learning, the use of the project method, group work, selection of the content of education in individual disciplines, etc., and also of “the invaluable contributions which the classroom teacher can make to the science of education” (Washburne, 1924, p. 365).

The system of teacher training was based on the practice-centered approach. The University of Minnesota Summer School opened in 1928 offered teachers a range of opportunities to upgrade their professional skills. During six weeks Winnetka’s most advanced teachers acquainted the attendees with the basic elements of the Winnetka Plan educational concept and its practical implementation, curricula, manuals, took part in master classes and conducted open classes. Attending the Summer School was obligatory for new Winnetka teachers. And yet the superintendent wrote: “Even then we were not fully satisfied. It was impossible in six weeks of lectures, seminars, and observations to undo the habits and techniques learned by teachers trained for dealing with classes rather than with individuals, to teach them to organize group and creative activities, to give them insight into the causes of undesirable behavior of children and how to deal effectively with children who exhibited such behavior (Washburne & Marland, 1963). This gave a fresh impetus for developing new competences, increasing the creative potential, a willingness to engage in experiments and research and an awareness that the entire learning and education process could be adapted to the child’s diverse needs. So successful was the upgrading course that Washburne and his colleagues conducted the Winnetka Summer School For Teachers) over the following twelve years (1929-1940) (Washburne & Marland, 1963).

In 1932, with active participation of private school teachers (The Francis W. Parker School in Chicago and The North Shore County Day School) The Graduate Teachers College of Winnetka was opened. Winnetka’s top teachers conducted classes at the college, Washburne delivered lectures and conducted seminars on the philosophy of education. Students came from the USA, Canada, Australia, China, India and the European countries. Some were sent by famous scientists, such as Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist and philosopher, Alfred Adler, an Austrian psychologist, psychiatrist and thinker, to name but two. Students learned the tricks of the teacher’s craft at Winnetka’s schools where each had a personal mentor. Some college graduates made an invaluable contribution to the development of education in the USA and elsewhere. In the 1920s and 1930s the Winnetka Plan gained international recognition. Democracy, shared goals, group work and mutual respect proved to be highly effective (Rogacheva, 2015). The key factors of the success of the collective’s educational activities were regular exchange of practices inside and outside the USA, the study of the educational heritage of the past, research activities, the development and spread of new forms and methods, the creation of proprietary manuals and materials as well as building of an individual education trajectory for each teacher (Yakovleva, 2018). Washburne saw staff training and development as creating opportunities for effective management, recognition and constant professional growth.

## 7. Conclusion

Creative use of past experience can be used to successfully tackle the problems facing modern pedagogical education. In particular, Washburne's system of training teachers for working under the Winnetka Plan provides material for understanding how to prepare a teacher for the implementation of various education technologies in the single education space using the unique possibilities of each of them.

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