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NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF EFFECTIVE TRAINING OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Hasii O. V.

*PhD in Economics, Associate Professor,
Director*

*Educational and Scientific Center for Higher Education Quality Assurance
of Poltava University of Economics and Trade
Kovalya str., 3, Poltava, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0002-5116-0448
o.v.hasii@gmail.com*

Gasii G. M.

*Doctor of Engineering Sciences, Professor,
Professor at the Department of Computer Technologies for Airport Construction
and Reconstruction*

*National Aviation University
Liubomyra Huzara ave., 1, Kyiv, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0002-1492-0460
hasii.hryhorii@npp.nau.edu.ua*

Pedchenko N. S.

*Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor,
First Vice-Rector
Poltava University of Economics and Trade
Kovalya str., 3, Poltava, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0001-5093-2453
vicerektor@puet.edu.ua*

Molchanova N. Yu.

*Candidate of Technical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Deputy Director
Educational and Scientific Center for Higher Education Quality Assurance
of Poltava University of Economics and Trade
Kovalya str., 3, Poltava, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0002-0040-9952
nemonn@ukr.net*

Sarapyn V. V.

*Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Pedagogy and Social Sciences
Poltava University of Economics and Trade
Kovalya str., 3, Poltava, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0002-1500-3912
sarapin_v@ukr.net*

Key words: *education, institution of higher education, informal education, formal education, non-formal education, quality of education.*

The article is devoted to scientific approaches to uncovering the essence of non-formal education as a modern effective tool for enhancing the quality of professional training of higher education students in higher education institutions. The purpose of the article is to substantiate scientific approaches to uncovering the essence of non-formal education as a modern effective tool for strengthening the quality of professional training of higher education students in institutions of higher education. The research is based on such general scientific and special methods as a scientific abstraction (to substantiate the basic conceptual apparatus); comparative analysis (when studying the evolution of approaches to revealing the essence of the concept of non-formal education); analogies (in the process of comparing existing scientific approaches); logical generalization (to formulate conclusions based on research results). The scientific article examines the theoretical basis of the essence of non-formal education as a modern effective tool for improving the quality of professional training of higher education students in institutions of higher education. It has been proven that a feature of the implementation of elements of informal education by institutions of higher education based on the principles of “learning by doing”, “learning to cooperate” and “learning to learn” is a combination of such features as self-motivation of students of higher education, development of personal and professional potential, the voluntary nature of education, the need to develop strategic thinking in a professional environment. It has been proven that a harmonious combination of formal and non-formal education is a highly competitive specialist for a potential employer. Practical significance of research results. An effective tool of a completed university culture has been developed, aimed at strengthening the quality of higher education based on a combination of formal and non-formal education.

НЕФОРМАЛЬНА ОСВІТА ЯК НЕВІД’ЄМНА СКЛАДОВА ЕФЕКТИВНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

Гасій О. В.

*кандидат економічних наук, доцент,
директор*

*Навчально-науковий центр забезпечення якості вищої освіти
Полтавського університету економіки і торгівлі
вул. Ковалю, 3, Полтава, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0002-5116-0448
o.v.hasii@gmail.com*

Гасій Г. М.

*доктор технічних наук, професор,
професор кафедри комп’ютерних технологій будівництва та реконструкції аеропортів
Національний авіаційний університет
просп. Любомира Гузара, 1, Київ, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0002-1492-0460
hasii.hryhorii@npp.nau.edu.ua*

Педченко Н. С.

*доктор економічних наук, професор,
перший проректор*

*Полтавський університет економіки і торгівлі
вул. Коваля, 3, Полтава, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0001-5093-2453
vicerector@puet.edu.ua*

Молчанова Н. Ю.

*кандидат технічних наук, доцент,
заступник директора*

*Навчально-науковий центр забезпечення якості вищої освіти
Полтавського університету економіки і торгівлі
вул. Коваля, 3, Полтава, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0002-0040-9952
nemonn@ukr.net*

Сарапін В. В.

*кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри педагогіки та суспільних наук
Полтавський університет економіки і торгівлі
вул. Коваля, 3, Полтава, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0002-1500-3912
sarapin_v@ukr.net*

Ключові слова: *освіта, заклад вищої освіти, неформальна освіта, формальна освіта, інформальна освіта, якість навчання.*

Стаття присвячена науковим підходам до розкриття сутності неформальної освіти як сучасного дієвого інструменту посилення якості фахової підготовки здобувачів вищої освіти у вітчизняних закладах вищої освіти. Метою статті є обґрунтування наукових підходів до розкриття сутності неформальної освіти як сучасного дієвого інструменту посилення якості фахової підготовки здобувачів вищої освіти у вітчизняних закладах вищої освіти. Дослідження ґрунтується на таких загальнонаукових та спеціальних методах, як: наукова абстракція (для обґрунтування базового понятійного апарату); компаративного аналізу (при дослідженні еволюції підходів до розкриття сутності поняття неформальної освіти); аналогій (у процесі порівнянь існуючих наукових підходів); логічного узагальнення (з метою формулювання висновків за результатами дослідження). У науковій статті розглянуто теоретичні основи сутності неформальної освіти як сучасного дієвого інструменту посилення якості фахової підготовки здобувачів вищої освіти у вітчизняних закладах вищої освіти. Доведено, що особливістю впровадження елементів неформального навчання закладами вищої освіти на принципах «навчатися в дії», «вчитися співпраці» та «навчитися вчитися» є сукупність таких ознак, як: самомотивація здобувачів вищої освіти, розвиток особистісного і професійного потенціалу, добровільний характер навчання, потреба розвитку стратегічного мислення у професійному середовищі. Доведено, що гармонійне поєднання формального та неформального навчання формує висококонкурентного фахівця для потенційного роботодавця. Практична значущість результатів дослідження. Розроблений дієвий інструмент цілісної університетської культури, спрямований на посилення якості вищої освіти на основі поєднання формального та неформального навчання.

Statement of the problem. The growing concern of representatives of the educational community about the weak adaptation of national education systems to constant changes has caused the need for radical transformations and the corresponding renewal of educational paradigms. The transformations taking place in the educational space place demands on institutions of higher education for the formation of a competitive specialist, interesting for the employer, who possesses the necessary set of competencies and knowledge. These and other challenges in the system of higher education in the second half of the 20th century determined the prerequisites for the emergence of such a phenomenon as non-formal and informal education and non-formal learning. Therefore, the issue of researching the features and advantages of non-formal education as an integral component of effective training of higher education students at higher education institutions through the acquisition of soft skills is relevant.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The analysis of research in the field of quality assurance of training of higher education students shows the importance of integrating informal education into formal education, which determines increased attention to the content, forms, and methods of non-formal education. So, the theoretical aspects of non-formal education in the education system including the peculiarities of the combination of formal and non-formal education in the process of professional training are given in the works of O. Hasii [14], L. Sigaeva [23], N. Teryokhina [25], A. Goncharuk [10], and others. The foreign experience of the implementation and development of non-formal education is presented in the works of P. Coombs [2], P. Jarvis [13], A. Melnic [15], A. Grajcevcic [11], and others.

However, it is important to note that the issue of ensuring effective training of higher education students based on the application of theory and practice of the implementation of non-formal education practices in higher education institutions has not yet been investigated.

The goal of the article. The main goal of the article is to substantiate scientific approaches to uncovering the essence of non-formal education as a modern effective tool for enhancing the quality of professional training of higher education students in higher education institutions.

Main material of the study. The national system of education of Ukraine in general, and higher education in particular, today faces numerous challenges and tasks aimed at its recognition in the international context and European integration. In this regard, institutions of higher education are widely implementing international practices to expand the learning opportunities of students of higher education to develop their competencies acquired in formal education and develop new ones that increase the competitiveness

of specialists. Non-formal education creates these opportunities.

At the legislative level, as early as 2017, Article 8 of the Law of Ukraine “On Education” defined such types of education as formal, non-formal, and informal (self-education) [20]. Formal education and non-formal/informal education are terms used to describe certain types of learning that, in the former case, are institutionally organized and, in the latter case, take place outside of traditional formal educational institutions. Understanding that formal education is a structured educational model, which is organized and regulated by the legislative framework and established norms, is obtained according to educational programs following the legally defined levels of education, fields of knowledge, and specialties (professions) and provides for the achievement by the students of education of the learning outcomes determined by the educational standards of the corresponding level of education and qualifications [1]. However, in the conditions of the fluidity of the external environment as a field of work, future graduates of higher education institutions face an urgent need to meet their knowledge in a specific field today and now. You need to understand these opportunities, know how to use them for your development, and be able to learn informally, that is, without awarding state-recognized educational qualifications by education level, but with the possibility of assigning professional and/or awarding partial educational qualifications [20].

Research on the essence of non-formal education in the system of higher education confirms its relevance and relevance as a modern and widespread form of satisfying the educational needs of an individual. We present some scientific views on the essence of non-formal education in Table 1.

The common meaning of non-formal education, as Table 1 shows, covers the process of directed learning, education, and personal development, which is carried out through the motivated acquisition of knowledge to additional formal education. Institutions of higher education began to actively use opportunities for informal learning to individualize professional programs and respond to the individual needs of students of higher education. This represents a new approach to acquiring knowledge and developing students’ skills.

This approach leads to more effective learning and development of students, motivates students more, and improves academic achievements, as it takes into account their individual needs and interests [21]. Students get the opportunity to dipper explore topics that interested in and develop the skills they need in future careers. Also, very importantly, it has not only a short-term but also a long-term and lasting effect, especially when the non-formal education program builds life

skills and connections with other community members [24]. Besides, investigation [5] shows a significant impact of non-formal education, as an effective tool for improving the quality of education and professionalism of specialists, on the level of fostering innovation and competitiveness. Also in this context, the results of a study [4] in which participants of non-formal education define their experience gained in non-formal education as very positive is a vivid example, and the possibility of obtaining non-formal education as a very powerful

tool for successful development. Thus, non-formal education becomes an important component of the higher education learning process, contributing to the development of competent and self-sufficient graduates.

The advantages of non-formal education as a component of effective training of higher education students within the framework of formal education are:

1) inseparability with formal education, which determines the guidelines for expanding the knowledge of the specialist;

Table 1

Meaning «non-formal education» in the education system

Author/source	Meaning
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) [6]	Training that is based on a planned activity that is not clearly identified as training in terms of tasks, length of training, or support for learners, but contains a significant training element, but does not usually result in certification.
European Association for the Education of Adults [9]	Organized activity that lids people consciously develop as individuals, independently rely on their capabilities in social relations and activities by increasing the level of knowledge and understanding; correlation of one's thoughts and feelings with the thoughts and feelings of other people; development of skills and methods of their expression.
The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [3]	Part of continuous learning (lifelong learning) is designed to help the individual adapt to an ever-changing environment. It is based on the principles of voluntariness and accessibility and also involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills in different places and situations. This part of the training must meet the pedagogical goals and complement the formal training, actively involving the participants in activities and everyday life. It is based on experience and also ensures the satisfaction of participants' needs.
European Communities: A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning [7]	Usually, this is not accompanied by the issuance of a document and takes place in educational institutions, public organizations, or during individual classes with a tutor or trainer.
UNESCO Institute for Statistics [12]	It is an addition or alternative to formal education as a part of lifelong learning. It is available to people of all ages, without always following a continuous structured path. Non-formal education can be brief, less intense, and is usually offered in the form of short courses, workshops, or seminars. However, it often results in qualifications that not be officially acknowledged by national educational authorities, or sometimes no qualifications at all.
Council of Europe. European Youth Foundation [8]	It is an organized and structured initiative for personal and social individual development, to improve various skills and competencies outside the formal educational curriculum. These activities take place in settings like youth organizations, sports clubs, drama clubs, and community groups, where people gather to engage in collaborative projects, recreational activities, discussions, outdoor adventures, or creative pursuits like music and drama.
L., Sigaeva [22; 23]	Joint, group training as courses; interest groups; non-government organization.
P., Coombs & M., Ahmed [2]	Managed educational activities that take place outside the formal education system to provide certain types of education for special subgroups of the population.
P., Jarvis [13]	The educational process is integrated into a person's life and not limited to special educational activities in classrooms
A., Honcharuk [1]	Planned, structured, and focused educational activity, carried out outside formal education institutions, is aimed at meeting the most diverse educational needs of different population groups, including age groups from early childhood to the elderly. However, it does not provide a legalized diploma.
N., Teryokhina [25]	Discovering new information about various aspects of life through courses, sections, interest groups, church attendance, etc.
Law On Education of Ukraine [20]	Non-formal education usually involves studying educational programs without obtaining state-recognized qualifications for various levels of education but can lead to awarding professional or partial educational qualifications.

2) a real possibility of improving the quality of professional training of students due to the deepening of competencies in the profession;

3) the possibility of personal development for participants in the educational process who learn or develop skills and abilities that are not provided for by a curriculum (leadership qualities, time management, stress resistance, the ability to think critically, the ability to learn and express one's own opinion, the ability to live in conditions of dynamic changes, social self-realization, etc.);

4) the voluntary nature of its acquisition, which dictates the self-awareness and motivation of higher education students to improve their qualifications in combination with the possibility of maximum adaptation of educational services to needs [1];

5) identification of the need to think strategically, to solve not only ordinary issues but also strategic ones, if necessary, to verify information according to the criteria of scientific validity and reliability.

The key principles of non-formal education are:

1) «Learning by doing» – when a combination of theoretical and practical is envisaged, and the development of competencies is realized through practical activity;

2) «Learning to cooperate» – the development of the teamwork ability with awareness of differences in views, ways of acting, perception, thinking, etc., that is, the ability to accept others in all their diversity and the ability to cooperate with them;

3) «Learn to learn» – acquiring the ability to continuously look for information, its processing, and the ability to reflect, analyze experience, identify individual educational goals, as well as the ability to apply available knowledge and skills.

Taking into account the advantages of the international experience of non-formal education and the possibilities of their recognition in the formal education system, the Ministry of Education and Science

of Ukraine developed the Procedure for recognition in higher and professional pre-higher education of learning results obtained through non-formal and/or informal education № 130 dated 08.02.2022 [19], which is mandatory for use in the educational process by institutions of higher education.

Currently, Ukrainian institutions of higher education are developing internal policies for the implementation of non-formal learning in the formal educational process according to educational programs. In particular, the universities affiliated with the authors – Poltava University of Economics and Trade (PUET) and National Aviation University (NAU), have created opportunities for students for informal education during their studies. For this purpose, universities have developed and implemented clear and understandable policies for the recognition of learning outcomes obtained in non-formal and/or informal education within the framework of formal education, which are outlined in the internal documents of the quality management system. For clarity and convenience, the internal documentation of the universities is shown in Table 2.

In our opinion, the task of a higher education institution in the quality training of a modern specialist is to popularize and make students of higher education understand the advantages that contribute to their involvement in non-formal education. This process is voluntary, and motivational, and can satisfy the specialist's need to acquire new competencies, self-improvement, and self-development. Institution of higher education contributes to the formation of awareness and understanding among students about the possibilities of non-formal education in modern realities and the future.

Today, exploring non-formal education is expanding in the direction of finding ways to integrate it into the formal educational process and the quality of acquisition of professional competencies by the acquirers.

Table 2

Policy in non-formal education

	PUET	NAU
Policy	Regulations on the procedure for recognizing learning outcomes obtained through non-formal and/or informal education	Regulations on the procedure for recognizing the results of studies obtained through non-formal and/or informal education of the National Aviation University
Publicity and promotion	in public access	in public access
	Website PUET/Education/Non-formal education	Website NAU/Educational process/Regulations
	Visualized infographic of the recognition procedure	Website AVIATOR.NAU/NAU HUB for non-formal education
	Syllabus	Syllabus
	Offers of learning platforms	Offers of learning platforms
The procedure for re-enrollment of study results	Available [14, 17]	Available [18]

To strengthen them, higher education institutions introduce elements of dual (practically oriented) training [16]. This is done so that the employers themselves, who are interested in potential employees, can influence the process of professional training of graduates – make suggestions during the arrangement of the variable component of educational programs, participate in the work of qualification commissions, be present during the defense of course/qualification works, to provide students with the opportunity for internships in their organizations, etc.

Conclusions and prospects for further scientific research. Thus, in the modern educational context, non-formal education has become extremely relevant and important for higher education institutions and their students. Its focus on the development of practical skills, communicative competence, and the ability to adapt to the rapidly changing modern world makes it an indispensable component of deep and comprehen-

sive education. The identified advantages of non-formal education based on the principles of “learning by doing”, “learning to cooperate” and “learning to learn” develop creative abilities, contribute to the emergence of innovative approaches and develop entrepreneurial thinking, providing students with tools for self-realization and a successful career. Taking into account the dynamics of modern society and the labor market, active participation in non-formal education becomes a guarantee of high competitiveness and expansion of opportunities for the young generation.

Further scientific research will be aimed at researching the possibilities of dual training based on enterprises, institutions, and organizations for participants in the educational process, which, in our opinion, will create the prerequisites for the mass interest of higher education seekers in securing the necessary and relevant professional competences, abilities and skills.

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