

FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

Vanche Boykov

University of Niš, Faculty of electronic engineering- Niš, Serbia, vance.bojkov@elfak.ni.ac.rs

Marieta Goceva

Technical vocational school „Nikola Ionkov Vaptsarov"- Radomir, Bulgaria
marietagoceva@gmail.com

Abstract: Education has only ever been accessible to a small number of people. For centuries, the mission of continuing education has been to enable the transfer of socio-historical experience, preserved through oral or written tests, from the older to the younger generation. In classical education, one seeks information, and in today's modern society, information is everywhere, and one must possess a vast amount of knowledge in order to be able to choose the part that meets his expectations and needs. We live in a time when economic and educational competition are the focus of our daily lives. Dynamics in society, mobility, new professions and challenges require permanent education. Lifelong learning is the engine of innovative processes and development of the modern man, it is a facilitator of change in the individual and opens the door to knowledge. Intentional education is the most important, but it also takes place outside the institutions, wherever the life and work of the person takes place. Nowadays, the long expectations of the past give way to the rapid mastery of key knowledge, formation of basic qualities, personal and professional skills and competences. Because formal education is not the only way we can acquire knowledge. There are other options called "non-formal" and "informal" education. Facing new situations and problems leads to the acquisition of new skills in addition to the formal education process, and very often these abilities are even more important and useful than those we have acquired in school.

Continuous learning allows us to change the world in which we live in a constructive direction with a positive example, and information literacy is at its core. The development of the concept of lifelong learning, a global trend in the development of society and in particular of education, is aimed at continuing education.

The authors analyze formal, non-formal and informal education with special attention to their advantages and disadvantages.

Keywords: Education, knowledge, institutions, modern society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of education and its implementation have become a feature of modern society, which is gradually becoming a knowledge society. The changes are visible and evident especially in the natural sciences and engineering, but they also affect the social sciences and humanities. Some technologies only become old after one year, which requires special care in the education of the younger generations and higher education professionals, especially in the field of engineering. Albert Einstein thinks that "education is what remains after everything is forgotten about what is learned in school", while for Nelson Mendel, education is "the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world."

Education can be defined as "a pedagogical process in the function of enriching human knowledge. It covers the adoption of a particular system of knowledge, the formation of practical skills and habits, which is a prerequisite and basis for the development of cognitive strengths and abilities, the formation of a scientific worldview, for the linking of knowledge with practical, professional and any other activity".²¹ English, which first introduced compulsory education in 1870, defines education as "a process of changing one's personality in the desired direction by adopting different content according to the age and need of the individual." Education for the Russians is "a directed process of education and upbringing in the interest of the individual, society and the state, leading to the mastery of cultural values, the moral and emotional attitude to the world, the experience of professional and creative activities that preserve and develop the spiritual and material achievements of humanity. "

Educational activity can be intentional and unintentional. Intentional education has an institutional character and takes place in educational institutions, while unintentional education is an unplanned and unorganized process that takes place spontaneously and is initiated and realized from life itself. The impact of education on the formation of the individual and society is constant, and the process itself is realized in the form of formal, non-formal and informal education. In recent years, the terms formal education, non-formal education and informal learning have been used in various European documents in the context of lifelong learning.

²¹ Pedagogical Encyclopedia, 1989: 126

2. FORMAL EDUCATION

The Council of Europe defines formal education as a “structured education and training system that moves from pre-primary and primary education through secondary education to university education. It is carried out in pre-school institutions, through mainstream general education institutions, then in general or vocational secondary schools leading to higher education institutions and the award of a diploma.”²² According to Kobs, formal education is “an educational system with a hierarchical structure and assessment, which lasts from primary school to college including, in addition to full-time academic studies, various specialized programs and institutions for technical and vocational training. For Kulic, formal education is an educational process that takes place within a formal education system hierarchically structured (from elementary schools to colleges), which ultimately lead to the acquisition of certain titles and diplomas. We believe that formal education is knowledge gained in structured-defined systems organized and managed by state institutions with the ultimate outcome of obtaining a verified certificate.

According to Krull, school education is based on formal principles, which are reflected in:

- facilitating the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills in accordance with a predefined plan and program;

- it is hierarchically structured in the sense that the teacher-student relationship is one-way and vertical and that the teacher is the carrier of knowledge and the student is the recipient of knowledge;

- divided into grades (elementary school, secondary school and university);

- enables the acquisition of diplomas, titles and status in society;

- is inherently inflexible and not adaptable to individual needs.²³

Formal education includes pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, higher education, adult education and lifelong learning.

Pre-school education includes the upbringing and training of children from pre-school to school and lasts four hours a day for at least nine months. The activity is carried out in pre-school institutions which, in addition to education, provide nutrition, preventive health care and social protection for their graduates.

Primary education is compulsory in almost all countries of the world, lasts seven, eight or nine years and is carried out in two educational cycles (I to IV class and V to VII / VIII / IX class).

Secondary education is provided in high schools and schools for vocational and artistic education. Secondary education training institutions may also implement an individualized education plan for students and adults with disabilities, for music and ballet education, for adult education, specialized and master's education programs, vocational training, training programs, and in special cases preschool and initial education and training programs.

Higher education is achieved through academic and professional research based on accredited higher education curricula. In academic studies, students are trained in the development and application of scientific, artistic and professional achievements, and in professional students the application and development of professional knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the work process. The studies are conducted in three stages: the first (basic academic studies, basic professional studies and specialized professional studies), the second (master academic studies²⁴, master professional studies and specialized academic studies) and the third - doctoral academic studies.

Almost all European countries apply the Bologna scoring system, with basic academic studies having between 180 and 240 ECTS credits, basic credits of 180 ECTS credits, and specialist vocational and academic credits of at least 60 ECTS credits. Master of Academic Studies with a previously completed basic academic degree of 240 ECTS credits shall have at least 60 ECTS credits and at least 120 ECTS credits in addition to the previously completed basic academic study volume of 180 ECTS credits. Master of Professional Studies with a previously completed volume of study with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits will receive at least 120 ECTS credits. Studies in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy work according to an integrated study program with a total of 360 ECTS credits.

Doctoral studies require a minimum of 300 ECTS credits, so that upon completion they receive an additional 180 ECTS credits.

3. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education means any planned educational program designed to enhance the competences, skills and abilities beyond the formal educational environment.²⁵ According to UNESCO non-formal education is “organized educational activity beyond the formal system, which aims to respond to the needs of users as well as the objectives of training”.

²² Council of Europe Charter of Education, 2010

²³ Krulj, R. , Kachapor, S. & Kulic, R. 2003: 127

²⁴ In Bulgaria three, four or five semesters are pursuing a master's degree

²⁵ Council of Europe Charter of Education, 2010

Etling states that non-formal education is in addition to, and complementary to, the formal education system. In non-formal education, the student is at the center and the connection between the trainer and all participants is interactive and horizontal.²⁶ Non-formal education can pregnantly be defined as an ideological, procedural or social antithesis against formal education. In practice, these are not so much the antithesis but the parallel elements, processes and subsystems of the public education system, facing one mission and global goals, often using identical means, but in an alternative context.²⁷ Non-formal education is defined as any organized activity outside of the existing formal system, whether independent work or part of a broader activity, serving specific users and training objectives.²⁸ In our view, non-formal education is any form of training that is conducted outside the institutional form of courses, seminars, conferences and the like to satisfy personal interests. It takes place outside the formal education system, but has a clearly structured educational process and clear educational outcomes. The basic requirement for non-formal education is voluntary participation and, at the end of the process, the participants can be certified for the acquired knowledge.

Consequently, any organized educational activity beyond the formal system established, which is conducted individually or which is an important part of some broader activities and is intended to serve certain clients or educational purposes, is non-formal education which is centered more on training. This education emphasizes freely constructed programs that are less standardized and tailored to the lifelong needs of the trainees, beyond the prescribed sequential programs that are practiced in school. Rather than human relations with the more informal, the roles of teachers and students are not so strict and can often be reversed. The trainer encourages the trainees to be more independent. Non-formal education focuses on practical skills and knowledge, it is not so structured and more flexible than school education. The trainers and the trainees at the same level, there is no disproportion between them and the people learning what they need. Learning is a continuous process, opportunities for the very rich to learn, and the experience of the trainees is extremely important.

Non-formal education is part of lifelong learning in the late 1960s and early 1970s and shows all institutional instrumental benefits that are implicitly unattainable in formal education, such as:

- non-formal education is individualized in that it engages the interests, needs and capabilities of the individual student;
- it is voluntary for both the student and his mentor, coach or teacher, as each of them participates on his own volition and guided by his own motive and life project;
- it is realized in a variety of environments and the context is the leading authentic, ie life-realistic, not imaginary or educational-laboratory;
- based on alternative styles to learned and resold;
- balances more successfully between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning;
- integrates individual and social learning to raise it to the level of partnership-oriented, existing and solidarity;
- participatory (participatory and participatory based) and learner centered;
- holistic, process-oriented or authentic products of its creation;
- experimentally learned through the creation of intercultural exchanges and phenomena such as a learning stimulus and a means;
- the main groups of methods that are used in non-formal education (eg youth activities), with leading communication-based approaches: interaction, dialogue, mediation; activity: personal experiment, practice, experimentation; social participation: partnership, teamwork, networking; self-regulation: creativity, revelation, responsibility.²⁹

Non-formal education to a large degree is based on learning through learning, which is achieved through training, which involves four stages:

1. Experiment - use of one of the training methods (role play, simulation, casus, lesson).
2. Reflection - a review, an analysis of the exercise, which was carried out by asking questions. This phase in the training cycle allows the participants to go back and identify everything they have done in the previous phase. It is important for them to share between their reactions, their emotions and what they thought. With the help of a trainer and a structured way, the participants have to relate their emotions and think critically and analytically.

²⁶ Etling, 1993: 29

²⁷ Nikolaeva, S. 2008: 43

²⁸ Maryanovich, 2003: 9-14

²⁹ https://www.academia.edu/38006190/non-formal_education_-_the_authentic_image_of_modernization

3. Announcement - the participants make lessons, identify new windows, skills, changes in accents based on the previous two stages. The trainer helps the participants to take a step back from their recent experiences and discussions and to think critically about the “lessons learned” from the previous two stages.

4. Applicants - after the participants have passed the announcement, based on the lessons learned from the first two stages, they are considering the possibility to use the new knowledge and skills for the planned more effective work and conduct in the future. Under ideal training conditions, participants will be able to accommodate what they have learned in training, whether in professional or personal life, depending on their needs.³⁰

Non-formal education, as an instrument for enhancing knowledge and skills, has a complex content and is an important component of lifelong learning activities. All programs can be divided into two groups:

- educational programs that acquire different knowledge and skills and
- programs related to the education of life's accents and values.

Non-formal education is one that is not regulated by laws, regulations, regulations. This can be realized as much as in institutionalized educational institutions, and independent of them. Non-formal education covers all age groups. The content, forms, methods, educational technologies are determined in a dialogue between the learner and the learner. In self-education, the learner decides for himself the purpose, the tasks, the content, the technologies depending on their needs, motives, interests, opportunities. Non-formal education ends when the goal is met, the needs and interests are met. No documents are obtained and no rights are guaranteed. In most cases, even if a course document is issued, it is not equivalent to the documents issued in formal education and its recognition depends on the desire of the employer. Non-formal education is geared towards the development of the intellect, culture, personality traits and personal abilities of the person. These are verified and proven in life.³¹ In the specialized literature and in the practice there are various forms of informal training - a topic that is also the subject of a continuous discussion,³² which is reflected in the indicators used to observe these processes.

In order to better position non-formal education in the whole segment of education and society as a whole, it is necessary to include certain quality criteria or standards to assure the community and all stakeholders that such education makes sense, that is, by importance for the individual and society, to be professional and planned to carry with him certain competences that we can measure on the basis of certain standards.³³

4. INFORMAL EDUCATION

Informal education involves the process of lifelong learning in which an individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from everyday experiences (family, peer group, neighbors, meetings, library, media, work, play, etc.).³⁴

Informal education appeared for the first time in 1950 in Malcom Nols' book "Adult Learner Informal Education" and can be termed as a term that means learning from daily life, a combination of life and learning; it is considered a lifelong process in which each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from everyday experience and educational influences from his or her environment. This is, as the people say, the "school of life". We study everywhere and with everyone - at home, on the road, with peers, with children, watching television, listening to the radio, talking to friends. Often this is not intentional (conscious) learning and can go unnoticed by the individual, i.e. individuals do not perceive it as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills, although it is.³⁵

According to Kleis, informal education is an everyday experience that is not planned or organized (casual training). When these experiences are interpreted or explained by adults or peers, they become part of the informal. For Milutinovic, information education is voluntary, lifelong, motivated by curiosity, research, discoveries, a desire to complete the task, and social interactions. It is conducted at a pace appropriate to the learner and can be object oriented and visually orientated. This type of education provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between school and life because it provides an opportunity for learning and learning.³⁶

Informal learning is an uninstitutionalized, disorganized and unsystematic accumulation of competences in life.³⁷ This education is the result of a person's daily activities related to work, family and leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and is to some extent understood as "casual, unexpected, additional, incidental" education. It is

³⁰ Pavichevich & Petrovich, 2015: 106-107

³¹ <http://da.uni-vt.bg/u/705/pub/435/izbor.doc>

³² Atanasova, M., 2015: 37

³³ Milovanovic, 2009, <http://www.wavemagazine.net/>

³⁴ Council of Europe Charter of Education, 2010

³⁵ <http://www.zelimdabudem.com/types-obrazovanja/>

³⁶ Milutinovich, J. 2003: 394-407

³⁷ Pre-school and School Education Act, 2016: 48

not planned and structured in terms of training goals, training time, student support and much more. It does not lead to certification. From a student's perspective, this may be conscious, but in most cases it is unconscious, accidental.³⁸ So, informal education is unplanned, spontaneous; learning without a clear intention and is carried out in everyday life and in various situations (through interaction with friends, parents, media, special plan and structure). The results, although not visible to the learner, are rarely recorded and never certified. However, Europe 2020 has focused on the active involvement of children, students and young people in voluntary civic initiatives through which they develop their competences through non-formal learning and informal learning.³⁹ Particular attention should be paid to the disadvantages of this education, which is reflected in the perception of attitudes and negative values (real programs, emphasizing negative traits, etc.). In addition to formal, non-formal and informal education, Günther Dohman also emphasizes incidental learning as a special type of non-formal education that is completely unplanned.

5. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

With the development of information and communication technologies, knowledge becomes more accessible because, in addition to formal education (schools, academies and colleges), non-formal education (courses, seminars, trainings and free study materials) is also accessible to people. There are some differences between formal and non-formal education:

- the acquisition of knowledge in formal education takes place under very structured conditions, whereas in non-formal education it takes place in real situations;
- knowledge transfer in formal education is vertical - the relationship between the teacher and the trainees is one-way (the teacher is the carrier of knowledge and he is on top, the student is below and he is the trainee), while the process of knowledge transfer in non-formal education is interactive, two-way and horizontal (based on experiential learning);
- the acquisition of knowledge in formal education is carried out according to officially established plans and programs (standardized and mostly theoretical knowledge), and in the case of non-formal education, it is carried out mainly through practical work (skills and practical knowledge are acquired);
- the duration of formal education is limited in time, while non-formal education is not limited (lasts a lifetime);
- Completion of formal education leads to a diploma, while non-formal education focuses on the acquisition of applicable knowledge and skills.

The following differences can be observed between formal and informal education:

- formal education is institutional while informal education is unorganized;
- formal education is hierarchically organized (elementary school, secondary school, college) until informal education is organized;
- formal education is under the supervision of the state while informal education is provided outside the school;
- formal education is approved according to established plans and programs, while informal education is carried out without a clear intention in everyday life and in different contexts;
- formal education involves obtaining a document, while the results of non-formal education are never verified by a certificate or document.

The differences between non-formal and informal education are reflected in the following:

- non-formal education is organized while non-formal education is not;
- non-formal education is systematized and informal education is not systematized;
- non-formal education takes place outside the school in the form of training / teaching, and non-formal education takes place outside the school (in the family, at work, in leisure, in society);
- Completion of non-formal education can lead to some certification, which in some cases may help employment, as long as the results of informal education are not certified and are not immediate and visible.

6. CONCLUSION

Chinese Confucian philosopher Hong Tzu claims that "learning lasts until death and only then stops ... Learning means being human, and giving up learning means being a beast." According to him, education and upbringing are of great importance for human development.

³⁸ Colardyn, D., J. Bjornavold, 2004: 71

³⁹ Zhelyazkova, T. & Bancheva, M., 2018: 7

Education can be defined as preparing the younger generation for life in society, that is, transferring to the younger one what society has already accumulated. In addition, knowledge is needed to solve problems that older generations have not encountered because, as French intellectual Marcel Proust says, "true discovery is not about looking for new countries, but about winning new eyes."⁴⁰

Education can be formal, informal and informal.

Formal education is usually linked to the system of formal educational institutions and the receipt of a final educational document.

Non-formal education includes continuing vocational training, non-formal general education and various other cultural and educational programs. At the end of the training, successful trainees receive certificates and certificates.

Informal education follows a person throughout his life. It is realized in two forms - implicit (non-systemic, random) and explicit (conscious, directed).

Research shows that the level of development and differentiation of non-formal and informal learning is in direct proportion to the level of development of society.⁴¹ Non-formal and informal education is not a barrier to formal education as they relate to three specific educational areas:

- informal - with learning resulting from daily human activities and on-the-job training;
- non-formal - with adult education and lifelong education, without the possibility of obtaining a certificate;
- formal - with organized educational activities at school.

These three forms of learning complement each other and affect lifelong learning.

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⁴⁰ Marcel Proust (1871-1922) is a French novelist, essayist and critic. His most famous work is *Seek the Lost Time* in seven volumes.

⁴¹ Boykov, V. & Boykov, D., 2019: 72