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FEATURES AND POTENTIALS OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The aim of the article is to define features and potentials of non-formal adult education in Ukrainian educational environment that is focused on adult learners' development and motivation; effective change management; the challenge of real life adult learners can face; ability to prove adult learners can use knowledge to introduce themselves professionally and communicate effectively in everyday situations and work. General scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis and generalization of the scientific information on different theoretical approaches to the problem of non-formal adult education have been used. One of the most important tasks at the present stage of modernizing non-formal adult education in national teaching and learning process is to ensure teaching quality according to both national and international requirements as well as support adult learners in delivering successful learning preparing them for future challenges. This issue is partly a reaction to the rapid changes in technologies adult learners can see around and experience on a daily basis. Information technologies, effective tools and timely forehanded receiving of information are becoming essential and crucial factors in the teaching lifelong education process. There is a need to bring into focus the non-formal adult education process to improve the design and structure of adult learning opportunities. In this article, we address concepts and approaches, which are equipped with appropriate innovative-based effective tools in accordance with the latest requirements identifying key issues that emerge in non-formal adult education, introducing them as substantial elements of teachers' professional competence and their effective use in lifelong education process. Particular attention is paid to the teacher's role and significance in non-formal adult education making such a process more meaningful for adult learners.

Key words: adult learner, andragogical staff, adult education, non-formal adult education, lifelong learning, lifelong professional development.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТА ПОТЕНЦІАЛ НЕФОРМАЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ ДОРΟΣЛИХ В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ ОСВІТНЬОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ

Мета статті – визначити особливості та потенціал неформальної освіти дорослих в українському освітньому просторі, яка зосереджується на: розвитку та мотивації дорослих учнів; ефективному керуванні змінами; викликах реального життя, з якими можуть зіткнутися дорослі учні; здатності довести, що дорослі учні можуть використовувати знання для професійної самореалізації та ефективного спілкування в повсякденних ситуаціях та на роботі. Такі загальнонаукові методи, як аналіз, синтез та узагальнення наукової інформації були використані щодо різних теоретичних підходів до проблеми неформальної освіти дорослих. Одним із найважливіших завдань на сучасному етапі модернізації неформальної освіти дорослих у вітчизняному навчальному процесі є забезпечення якості викладання відповідно до національних та міжнародних вимог, а також підтримка дорослих учнів в успішному навчанні, що готує їх до майбутніх викликів. Це питання частково є реакцією на швидкі зміни в технологіях, які дорослі учні можуть бачити навколо і відчувати на собі щодня. Інформаційні технології, ефективні інструменти та своєчасне випереджувальне отримання інформації стають важливими і вирішальними факторами у процесі навчання впродовж життя. Існує потреба привернути увагу до процесу неформальної освіти дорослих з метою вдосконалення структури навчальних можливостей. У цій статті ми розглядаємо концепції та підходи, які оснащені ефективними інструментами відповідно до останніх вимог, визначаючи ключові питання, що виникають у неформальній освіті дорослих, представляючи їх як суттєві елементи професійної компетентності викладачів та їх ефективне використання в процесі навчання впродовж життя. Особлива увага приділяється ролі та значенню викладача в неформальній освіті дорослих, що робить цей процес більш значущим для дорослих учнів.

Ключові слова: дорослі учні, педагог дорослих освіта дорослих, неформальна освіта дорослих, навчання впродовж життя, професійний розвиток впродовж життя.

Introduction. We are living in the world of unprecedented rapid changes and blurring of boundaries in the working environment towards increasing intercultural consciousness, internationalization and globalization. The world of work is very changeable being hit with globalization and information technologies, and as a result, the labour market introduces new requirements to professionals. Employers are

updating the list of twenty-first century skills and competencies for a particular position and as a result, most jobs are modernizing and transforming. More and more adults are seeking to solve their life problems and meet their educational needs through lifelong education. Adults are trying to acquire the relevant competencies in order to be competitive at the labour market nationally and internationally. (Knowles et al., 2012; Lukyanova et al., 2019;

Milana, & Tarozzi, 2021). Recent research on the educational outcomes has shown that there is a gap between the knowledge and skills needed at work place and the knowledge and skills obtained through formal traditional education.

The aim of the article is to view the concept of lifelong adult education that is becoming a defining condition for the competitiveness of an adult population in a modern society actualizing the development of non-formal adult education.

Relevance of the research. The first theoretical works on non-formal adult education appeared in the middle of the 20th century. In these works, non-formal adult education was identified as a form of education that is better than traditional formal education (Lindeman, 1989; Illeris, 2004). Importance of non-formal adult education is currently being discussed at the different levels in the national and world educational community. Educators and experts conduct numerous studies to find successful strategies and practices for adult education as a whole and non-formal adult education in particular in a lifelong educational context. (Lindeman, 1989; Imel, 2001; Antikainen, & Kauppila, 2002; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgarther, 2006; Ohienko, 2009; Rinne, Heikkinen, Salo, 2007; Knowles et al., 2012; Mc Call et al., 2018; Ogienko, & Terenko, 2018; Anishchenko, 2019; Lukyanova et al., 2019; Hamlin, 2020; Ajani, 2021; Milana, & Tarozzi, 2021; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023).

Analysis of recent publications. The analysis of the lifelong adult education of many countries allows us to state that non-formal adult education is an important component of the national educational system as a developed socio-pedagogical phenomenon that functions properly. (Antikainen, & Kauppila, 2002; Kuosmanen, 2014; Ogienko, & Terenko, 2018; Samodumska, 2019; Lukyanova et al., 2019; Milana, & Tarozzi, 2021). It is well known with and accepted by the majority including governments, teachers, educators, adult learners and employers over the past decades and operates as a core and determining factor of the stable economic growth and development of most countries.

According to O. Anishchenko, non-formal adult education provides adult learners with a certain degree of flexibility and autonomy creating the possibility of obtaining knowledge in the process of lifelong professional development at any time and place (Anishchenko, 2019; Samodumska,

2019). O. Ogienko and I. Meleshko state that the principles of adult education are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the development of non-formal adult education considering the versatile nature and ambiguous concept of lifelong education. (Ogienko, Meleshko, 2017).

M. Livingston and D. Cummings-Clay encourage using andragogy advances adult learning and identify the andragogical approaches that can serve as examples that should be used to expand the learning outcomes of adult learners. (Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023). The Finnish scholar R. Kuosmanen reveals the essence of the andragogical approach, defines its role and significance in the organizing of adult learning process in educational institutions of Finland, and analyzes andragogical principles and technologies of adult learning. (Kuosmanen, 2014).

Presentation of the main material. Different governmental and social organizations as well as employers recognize that non-formal adult education is able to meet the professional, social, cultural, educational and most importantly personal needs of adults promoting their motivation and self-direction at the mature age. ((Antikainen, & Kauppila, 2002; Kuosmanen, 2014; Ogienko, and Terenko, 2018; Anishchenko, 2019; Moskalenko, 2018; Samodumska, 2019). Due to historical aspects and successful reforms, the system of non-formal adult education in Finland takes the leading position in adult educational environment. According to Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC, 2013), which assesses the adults' professional skills and competences of working age in OECD countries, Finland is one of the leaders in the development of adult education, particularly of non-formal adult education. One of the basic principles of Finnish non-formal adult education is that all adult learners have equal access to high-quality education and training. It means that the same educational opportunities should be available to all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, age, wealth or where they live. Adults' earlier experiences and skills form the basis for the process of learning increasing an individual's educational learning level. (FNBE, 2011).

Analyzing non-formal adult education experience of the European countries, we can note that the research carried out at different levels, each of which analyzes:

1) development and improvement of policy strategy for national legislation in adult education;

2) the process of the network formation of educational institutions for the adult learners as well as educational services;

3) implementation of educational programs and their correction. ((Antikainen, & Kauppila, 2002; Kuosmanen, 2014; Hamlin, 2020).

It is necessary to take into account a person's ability to learn throughout life effectively. Adult educational activity is focused on enriching creative potential, acquisition of human competence, improvement of knowledge and skills. (Knowles et al., 2012). It cannot be denied that non-formal adult education is an integral element of human life which includes basic, additional training and self-education and based on the principles of humanism aimed at acquiring knowledge by adult learners regardless of their social or any other status, personal development and the development of democratic consciousness. (Kuosmanen, 2014). Analysis of the features of non-formal adult educational approaches allows us to distinguish the following criteria of its quality:

1) the assignment of learning objectives, which are reached by applying appropriate andragogical approaches;

2) the appropriateness of the innovative methods of teaching to the general goals and content of non-formal adult education and specific learning objectives;

3) the possibility of wide usage of andragogic approaches and innovative methods;

4) the conformity of the special steps used to the individual style of adult activity;

5) the availability and effectiveness of educational materials;

6) the introduction of innovative technologies into the non-formal adult educational process.

7) the sustainable development as an important learning outcome.

Experts admit that each of these aspects emphasizes a certain side of the adult educational phenomenon, but the main idea is the incompleteness of education for an adult. (Antikainen, & Kauppila, 2002; Milana, & Nesbit, 2015; Ogienko, & Terenko, 2018; Anishchenko, 2019; Rasskazova, 2017; Moskalenko, 2018; Milana, & Tarozzi, 2021).

Innovative approaches to the formation of the meaning of lifelong education attract special

attention of Ukrainian researchers. Over the last decade, Ukrainian scholars have shown a strong interest in solving the problem of the lifelong educational process, given the importance of such an aspect as non-formal education of adults. Non-formal adult education, gradually but surely, is becoming a separate, independent component of the national adult education. (Ogienko, & Terenko, 2018; Anishchenko, 2019; Rasskazova, 2017; Moskalenko, 2018; Samodumska, 2019; Lukyanova et al., 2019).

Ukrainian educators and experts have been concerned with the importance of modernizing non-formal adult education trying to find new methods and tools for adult learners' training in shifting and choosing a new career path. They try to enhance of non-formal adult education standards creating the conditions to obtain new professional soft and hard skills for adult learners making emphasis on work-related learning and support adults with strong vocational background in order to simplify the process of adaptation. (Ogienko, & Terenko, 2018; Anishchenko, 2019; Samodumska, 2019; Rasskazova, 2017; Moskalenko, 2018). Since one of the primary tasks of education is to prepare adults for professional life, teachers and psychologists see the priority direction of work-related learning in improving students' ability to understand what they are learning and what for. (McCall et al., 2018; Hamlin, 2020). One of the most urgent problem in non-formal adult education includes the necessity to establish close links between learning process and real working requirements. (Abela, 2009; Barkley, 2009). All the activities that encourage adult learners to develop their skills have to become the core part of their education. (McCall et al., 2018; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023).

It cannot be denied that teachers, in our context pedagogical workers for teaching adults in non-formal education, and andragogical staff (educators) play a key and significant role in non-formal adult education making such a process more enjoyable and meaningful for adult learners. (Samodumska, 2018). They can and should enable adult learners to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities, form views and adapt to constant changes in the social environment. At present teachers are still searching for mechanisms and effective tools to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the educational process, particularly through the

implementation effective strategies and techniques. (McCall et al., 2018; Samodumska et al., 2022; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023). Teaching in today's educational world gives educators a unique chance to help adult learners realize their potential and impact on their lives developing intercultural understanding, which is certainly one of the four missions of education in this century: learning to know, do, be and live together. (McCall et al., 2018; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023). These days it is particularly appropriate and valuable. Teachers are sure to be able to:

1) show how to use information in new ways and interact with it;

2) teach adult learners to extend limits of their own minds;

3) help adult learners achieve new skills, abilities and competences which are necessary and recognized;

4) motivate adult learners to master their previously obtained knowledge gradually but surely;

5) satisfy adult learners' demands for progress evidence;

6) enhance adult learners' knowledge and experience with training and professional development;

7) give support, advice and ideas adult learners need in their educational process

8) offer different ways of teaching and learning. (Stern, & Kaur, 2010; Samodumska, 2018; Ajani, 2021; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023).

Using different innovative tools can extend limits of educational process, augment students-teachers cognition, help adult learners use obtained knowledge and skills in new ways. (Noonan, & Erickson, 2018; Stern, & Kaur, 2010; Huggins, & Stamatel, 2015; Samodumska et al., 2022).

The issue of training andragogical staff and qualified teachers who are able to work with adult learners is one of the most important in the non-formal adult education system. (Samodumska, 2018). The training of teachers must be carried out only at universities that have appropriate departments of pedagogical education. The high level of knowledge and skills of teachers are the main constituents that fully trusted by the state and society. The most talented people are involved in teaching activities. (Samodumska, 2018; Ajani, 2021).

Educators help adult learners improve abilities skills and knowledge, introduce them to different

points of view on the subjects, with various theoretical and practical approaches, teach adult learners to read information critically and be able to apply it in practice. (Samodumska, 2018; Hamlin, 2020; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023). In the era of innovative technologies, one of the main goals of non-formal adult education is to stimulate the ability of adults to work effectively with information. Active adults involved in a lifelong educational and creative process face new challenges: instead of learning to get information, they now need to learn to extract what they need from the mass of materials available to them. ((Jakku-Sihvonen, & Niemi, 2006; Martin, & Bolliger, 2018; Livingston, & Cummings-Clay, 2023).

Perspectives of Non-formal Adult Education Development.

The formation of new values in society and the appropriate public attitude to the role and importance of non-formal adult education requires appropriate scientific justification and the search for scientifically practical ways of research to give the practical recommendations on the implementation of constructive ideas of the countries' experience in educational environment of Ukraine. At the state and institutional levels to provide the effective development of educational perspective of adult learners by applying activities aimed at developing soft skills perspective of adult learners; updating educational and methodological resources for learning and counselling. In addition, experts believe that the introduction of elements of non-formal education in the educational process of universities will help adult learners be ready for constant professional growth and self-development, open to new ideas and broader perspectives; be involved in the development of education, as well as national and international educational projects.

Conclusions. Thus, the results of research confirm the importance and priority of the development of non-formal education for the existence of adults in an innovative environment. It is concluded that the studied problem is relevant among both Ukrainian and foreign scientists. We agree with scientists that non-formal adult education in the modern educational space performs a wide range of functions: active, creative, developing and informational.

The positions of both national and foreign researchers create a new basis for understanding the steps of reorganization of the non-formal adult education in a lifelong context, which should be

based on the principles of humanism. An effective educational process focuses not only on the acquisition of knowledge, but also on promotion the education of adults' readiness for a harmonious existence in a society. The analysis of the sources of non-formal adult education confirmed the opinion that new approaches to solve the researched problem are needed, as the society is rapidly developing and changing. In addition, there is no one-size-fits-all formula for all the

teaching learning problems of today's education, but prior theoretical knowledge and practical experience will certainly improve the quality non-formal adult education and help find effective adult development strategies in the context of lifelong education.

Further development of the outlined topic will allow national educators to get acquainted with modern approaches and effective mechanisms for the development of non-formal adult education.

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