

International Non-formal Education Conference
INEC 2023
Târgu Mureş, Romania, September, 29 – October, 1, 2023

Implications of mentoring in nonformal education activities

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Bibliography

1. Premises of the approach to the topic

a) Mentoring in education – a system of opportunities, experiences and spaces for reflection, learning and socio-professional development, impacting on:

- the mentee's teaching style
- professional, individual and social behaviour (inside and outside the institution)
- the socio-professional profile
- the paradigm of his or her professional, personal and social development
- the communication styles, learning styles, lifestyles, aiming at education for sustainable development

1. Premises of the approach to the topic

b) The three forms of education provide learning opportunities, situations and experiences with specific particularities and specific potential to contribute to the achievement of the educational goals set

The functional complementarity relationship in the context of forms of education:

Nr. crt.	Elementul	Explicitare
1.	- teleological dimension	- all forms of education aim to achieve the same scientifically predetermined goals, acting complementarily, synergistically and convergently, mutually reinforcing each other's influences
2.	- educational contents	- are conveyed by exploiting their informative and formative values and by exploiting the interactions, links, (inter)relations, associations/connections, (inter)dependencies between them, etc.
3.	- forms, strategies and ways of carrying out education	- are selected and combined flexibly, dynamically and creatively, in a systemic manner, used in an integrated way in educational contexts in which they are in constant and inevitable interaction

2. What (more) are non-formal educational activities?

Non-formal education:

- a form of education that encompasses educational activities and influences organised, most often, outside the education system, of a systematic, intentional/ deliberate nature, aimed at people of all ages, and pursuing educational goals consistent with those of formal education

Non-formal educational activities:

- are based on structured, organised and are most often carried out outside the education system.
- most often takes place in an institutionalised way (but not always, there are also situations where they are non-institutionalised)
- refers to less formalised educational realities
- are providers of learner-centred learning opportunities
- greater variety and flexibility than formal ones
- greater freedom of action and expression for the learner compared to formal ones
- they often take place in a relaxed, pleasant, relaxed atmosphere
- it takes advantage of the opportunities offered by NICT (New Information and Communication Technologies)
- the lack of systematic and rigorous evaluation approaches, which means that self-evaluation must be given greater weight.

Examples of para-school activities: educational activities in economic and scientific establishments, civic and vocational training activities.

Examples of peri-school activities: self-education activities, organised leisure/leisure activities in institutional settings, as educational, social, cultural, artistic, entertainment activities (libraries, museums, theatres, adult education centres, children's clubs, sports clubs) or in non-institutional settings (research activities, excursions, social-cultural activities, media education activities, virtual activities).

3. Reflecting the importance of non-formal educational activities and non-formal learning in current legislation

- Article 233, paragraph (9) of the Law on Pre-University Education no. 198 (Romanian Parliament, 2023a): "Educational effectiveness, which consists in the mobilisation of resources in order to achieve the expected learning outcomes, is described by the following criteria: (...) e) personal and professional development of teachers and students, including through the implementation of non-formal and informal education projects or activities, respectively participation in short or long-term mobility;"

- Article 182, paragraph (2) of the Law on Higher Education No. 199 (Romanian Parliament, 2023b): "Learning in non-formal contexts has an intentional character and takes place outside the formal education and training system, through planned activities in which there is some form of support for the learning process, based on the following characteristics:

- a) it is carried out with voluntary participation;
- b) it includes some form of course support for participants;
- c) it may be based on a curriculum and educational objectives."

4. Operational implications of mentoring in non-formal educational activities

The mentoring activity carried out by the mentor with the aim of guiding, advising, supporting, mediating the work of the teacher, educator, education specialist involved in non-formal education activities, can include all the stages and components specific to such activities:

1. The stage of needs analysis and awareness of the need for non-formal education activities
2. The work of designing non-formal education activities
3. The development stage of the non-formal education programme
4. The implementation or running phase of the non-formal education activity
5. The evaluation phase of non-formal education activity.

5. The role of mentoring in non-formal educational activities in the professionalization of mentoring activities

The professionalisation of mentoring activities requires:

- specialised training for the teachers being mentored, and the development of a set of skills to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of educational activities - formal, non-formal and informal
- the development of heuristic, creative and innovative approaches to their acquisition and use in different educational contexts and situations
- the training of mentors to assist and coordinate the mentee teachers in their non-formal education approaches.

As non-formal education is clearly expanding, mentoring in non-formal activities is acquiring a specific role in the professionalisation of mentoring activities.

6. Conclusions

- In non-formal activities, specialists in this field develop the necessary competences in an evolutionary process, in which mentoring is an essential activity.
- The mentor (teacher or non-formal education specialist) can support and motivate the teacher or non-formal education specialist at the beginning or at various stages of his/her professional development in order to improve, enhance and optimise the activities designed, organised and carried out.
- The levers used are diverse, including participatory strategies and digital technology, used in a systemic vision, taking into account the educational goals pursued.

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