



« Intergenerational activities of the students at Comenius university in Bratislava »



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Introduction

In our presentation we will focus on:

- general information about intergenerational learning and its importance.
- the formal and informal learning activities which are offered to the elderly students and integration in education from the intergenerational point of view

On the other hand we would like to present our results from the intergenerational research and projects with senior's involvement.



Importance of intergenerational learning

Education between generations has been known from the outset of human civilization and **was a natural thing** in any socio-economic formation.

Today, however, time brings **many changes that affect family life**; thereby weakening the pattern of the family and loosening contacts between generations.

The weakening of family functioning and the intergenerational learning in the family has the consequence that the school has become an important medium for learning and development of relations between the generations.



Intergenerational relationships and contacts

Experience shows:

- older and younger generations can be valuable educational resources for one another;
- in addition, the benefits can flow in multiple directions;
- children can bring energy, enthusiasm and support in the life of the elderly and the older ones bring experience and prudence;
- two generations can work together to obtain mutual personal benefits.



Categorising intergenerational practice

According to their forms, functions and learning areas, the **typology of interactions** between the elderly and the young is comprising:

- **Older adults serving children and youth** (as tutors, mentors; resource persons, coaches and friends, grandparents raising grandchildren);
- **Children and young people serving older people** (as friendly visitors, companions and tutors);
- **Older people and young people collaborating** in serving to the community;
- **Older people, young people and children together engaging in informal learning activities**, recreation, leisure and sports events or art festivals

Project ForAge Newsletter n.10, Brown and Ohsako (2003)



Types of activities involved in intergenerational learning

Categorized according to distinct principles which may overlap:

- Friendly and informal social encounters.
- Transfer of experience, knowledge, know-how and memories.
- Mutual creations (artistic, cultural or others).
- Active solidarity towards those in difficulty, living together.



•Project ForAge Newsletter n.10, ENIL report 2012



Slovak Universities of the Third Age

UTAs in Slovakia came into existence after 1990,
starting with the Comenius University in Bratislava
The systematic learning of older people offers mainly
segregation models of education.

UTA at Comenius University offers participants three-
year study programs in 39 study subjects – separated
from young students (about 2000 senior students
yearly are enrolling in the study)

New intentions can open space for **intergenerational
learning** at the university

www.cdvuk.sk/utv



What are the main subjects offered to seniors

- Archaeology
- Assertiveness training
- Astronomy
- Business skills for seniors
- Computers and Information
- Environmental science
- Economics
- Ethnology
- Expressive therapies
- General history
- General medicine
- Gerontology
- History of religions
- History of fine art
- History of Literature
- History of Opera
- History and monuments of Bratislava
- Law
- Financial learning
- Horticulture and gardening
- Japanese culture
- Journalism
- Latin and ancient Roman history
- Medicine
- Museology
- Pharmacology
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Regeneration of the strength of Seniors
- Slovak History
- Social work
- Spas
- Theatre and Music through the ages
- Tourism and services
- Yoga



Who are the students at the UTAs

At the beginning, the UTAs in Slovakia started their courses especially for retirees.

At present, UTAs are organized not only for retired people, but also for people medically retired (physically handicapped) without the age limit and also for people before retirement – generally for people 50+.

Currently, from population of 5 mil. inhabitants, there are about 7000 senior students at 16 UTAs across Slovakia.

The Association of Universities of the Third Age (ASUTV) of Slovakia was established as an initiative of Slovak universities on 1st of December 1994

www.asutv.sk



Intergenerational University programs

- are realized with the inclusion of young and older generations together in the same study subjects;
- give possibilities for the cooperation between the generations in the realization of study programs for the elderly students;
- open space for the common research, intergenerational projects and intergenerational activities



Cooperation in the university environment is based on:

- Intergenerational learning in the same study programmes (young student – older student)
- the relationship between the older student and the young lecturers or study manager
- comparison of the study success with further cooperation
- invitation to special intergenerational projects
- travelling together on study excursions.



Relationships between generations at the university are based on:

- mutual sympathy;
- sense of solidarity and intergenerational cohabitation;
- help offered to a different generation for special tasks
- Reciprocal relations between 3 generational groups (junior students, middle generation of teachers and students, senior students);



Conditions for successful intergenerational learning

- Positive relationship between generations and feelings of well-being and satisfaction
- The proximity of contacts (personal, of distance)
- Effective communication (requires feedback)
- Affinity in the educational needs
- Education as one of the values of human life.



Intergenerational research monitored by Slovak UTAs

Number of respondents: 1447

- **28% Male 72% Female**

Age scale:

- **-20: 12,4%**
- **21-25: 46,0%**
- **26 – 30: 4,5 %**
- **50 – 55: 4,1%**
- **56 – 60: 4,8%**
- **61-70: 21,8%**
- **70+: 6,5%**



Intergenerational research monitored by Slovak UTAs

Would you prefer joint educational programs for youth and seniors /all generations together

Possibilities	Young students of the universities	Elderly university students of UTA
Yes	46,2 %	42,9 %
No	22,5 %	20,3 %
I do not know	31,3 %	36,8 %

If yes in which subjects could they study?

Study subjects	Young students	Elderly students
Healthy lifestyle	42,2%	24,9%
History and ethnology	27,0%	15,3%
Information technologies	35,4%	20,1%
Language learning	36,4%	14,4%
Law	9,1%	4,8%
Theology	18,5%	10,9%
Civic education	27,4%	12,5%
Gardening, housing, family economy	27,0%	8,1%
other	0,2%	2,0%

What do you think could be the profit from the intergenerational learning?

Category	Young students	Elderly students
Better communication and relationships between generations	75,3%	72,4%
Increase in mutual acceptance between generations (in the family and society)	62,0%	66,5%
transmission of social heritage (behavior patterns, values, etc.).	50,6%	50,8%
Mutual informal learning	37,0%	27,3%
influence of the selection of professional orientation	15,0%	7,2%
other	0,1%	1,1%

What do you consider possible obstacles to intergenerational learning?

Category	Young students	Elderly students
ineffective communication	24,6%	23,2%
different educational needs	59,8%	49,0%
different attitude to education, or to a value of education	40,4%	38,7%
unsatisfactory intergenerational relations	18,7%	29,1%
conflict of opinions	54,1%	35,4%
different speed of acquiring and understanding information	56,7%	50,6%
other	0,0%	0,9%



Good practice from learning activities

Development of the business skills of the elderly in the intergenerational teams:

- How to establish a business and an own company
- How to prepare a project for running business
- How to find a realizable idea
- How to prepare own budget
- How to evaluate the results and find a solution



Good practice from learning activities

- Language courses guided by young volunteers / students
- Summer activities for children supervised by elderly students
- Seniors as volunteers in the city libraries teaching pupils / guiding children



Intergenerational physical activities

Zumba Gold takes the Latin and International dance rhythms and brings them to the active older adult; One aspect that attracts older adults to a Zumba is the music. It's a generation that grew up dancing. Another motive is to be able to dance and move in a way that's just fun while also improving their health. The participants are active older adults who still love to dance, work on perfecting their footwork enjoying the music



Intergenerational physical activities

- Nordic walking



- Aqua fitness



- Yoga and the strengthening of the body conditions

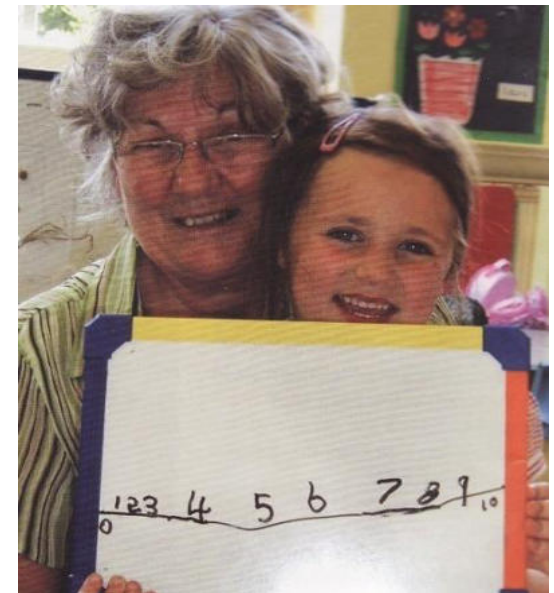


Physical activities help the elderly students to balance the learning activities



Summary: Advantages of the intergenerational learning

- Place for an intergenerational communication
- Bilateral learning and explaining the facts
- Exchange of the opinions, views – Feedback
- Mutual assistance in learning and personal lives
- Benefits for both sides:
 - Support for seniors to overcome barriers in education (ICT)
 - Grandparents feel responsible for education of grandchildren in certain areas



Thank you for your attention

