

Los programas de formación **sénior**

Transformaciones y perspectivas globales en la era digital

Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya (comp.)



Los programas de formación sénior

Transformaciones y perspectivas globales en la era digital

Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya
(comp.)

BIBLIOTECA DE LA UNIVERSITAT JAUME I. Datos catalográficos

Noms: Encuentro Nacional de Programas Universitarios para Personas Mayores (18è : 2024 : Castelló de la Plana), autor | Rodríguez Moya, Inmaculada, 1975- editor literari | Universitat Jaume I. Universitat per a Majors, organitzador | Universitat Jaume I. Publicacions, entitat editora

Títol: Los Programas de formación sénior : transformaciones y perspectivas globales en la era digital / Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya (comp.)

Descripció: Castelló de la Plana : Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I. Servei de Comunicació i Publicacions, [2024] | Col·lecció: Universitat per a majors ; 13 | Textos en anglès i castellà | Inclou referències bibliogràfiques

Identificadors: ISBN 979-13-87886-14-1 (paper) | 979-13-87886-15-8 (pdf)

Matèries: Educació d'adults -- Congressos

Classificació: CDU 374.7(063) | THEMA JNP



Ninguna parte de esta publicación, incluido el diseño de la cubierta, puede ser reproducida, almacenado o distribuido en cualquier forma o por cualquier medio (electrónico, químico, mecánico, óptico, de impresión o fotocopia) sin la previa autorización de la editorial.



Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I es un miembro de la UNE (Unión de Editoriales Universitarias Españolas), que garantiza la distribución y comercialización obras de publicados a nivel nacional e internacional.
www.une.es

Edita: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I. Servei de Comunicació i Publicacions
Edifici Rectorat, planta 0. Av. Vicent Sos Baynat, s/n 12071 Castelló de la Plana
Tel. 964 72 8821 publicacions@uji.es

© Del texto: los autores y las autoras, 2025

© De esta edición: Publicaciones de la Universitat Jaume I, 2025

Ilustración de la cubierta: vetavisual.com, 2025

ISBN papel: 979-13-87886-14-1

ISBN pdf: 979-13-87886-15-8

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/UniversitatMajors.13>

D.L.: CS 935-2025

Este libro ha sido posible gracias a la subvención concedida por la AEPUM para la celebración del XIII Encuentro de la Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios para Mayores.

ÍNDICE

Presentación

Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya. Universitat Jaume I 7

Nadežda Hrapková, *Seniors in education, factors and changes*.
EFOS president. Centre for Continuing Education at Comenius
University Bratislava, Slovakia 11

Alina Gil, Rafał Głębocki, Urszula Nowacka, *Lifelong Learning
Amid Skills Agility in the Digital Age*. Jan Dlugosz University
in Czestochowa, Poland 31

Alicia Murciano-Hueso, Esther Carreño-Corchete,
Javier Rubio-Muñoz, *Fuentes de información impresas y digitales
para jóvenes y mayores. Curso intergeneracional en el Programa
Interuniversitario de la Experiencia de la Universidad
de Salamanca*. Universidad de Salamanca 45

Álvaro Blanco Morett, *La investigación en comunicación
en los programas universitarios para mayores: revisión
bibliográfica*. Universidad de Extremadura 65

Ana Muñoz Gonzalo, Salomé Cuesta Valera, José Pedro García
Sabater, Jordi Linares Pellicer, Jorge Igual García,
*Una aproximación a la formación de mayores y la inteligencia
artificial*. Universitat Politècnica de València 83

| | |
|---|-----|
| Marián Alesón-Carbonell, Paula Doncel Recas, <i>La movilidad internacional en los Programas Universitarios para Mayores: una oportunidad para la internacionalización y un impulso al aprendizaje de idiomas y competencias clave</i> . Universidad Permanente. Universidad de Alicante | 107 |
| José Ramón Valero Escandell, Marian Alesón-Carbonell, <i>Tal como éramos. Tendencias demográficas recientes en la Universidad Permanente de la Universidad de Alicante</i> . Universidad Permanente. Universidad de Alicante | 139 |
| Salvador Vidal Raméntol, <i>Erasmus + del Campus de la Experiencia de UIC. Barcelona en Udine (Italia)</i> . Universitat Internacional de Catalunya | 177 |
| Salvador Cabedo Manuel, Pilar Escuder Mollón, <i>Revisión de los XXV años del Programa de Formación Permenente de la UJI</i> . Universitat Jaume I | 191 |

PRESENTACIÓN

Los días 28 a 30 de octubre de 2024 se celebró en Castelló el XVIII Encuentro de la Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios de Mayores, bajo el título *Cambios generados en la última década de los Programas de Formación Permanente*. La Asociación cuenta ya con veinte años de existencia y una cincuentena de programas participantes. Cada año organiza seminarios y encuentros para compartir entre los directores y técnicos de la formación de adultos las novedades en este tipo de programas. La UJI, que es socia fundadora de la Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios de Mayores, tuvo como primer objetivo analizar la evolución en la última década de los programas sénior a nivel nacional e internacional. Además, aunque ya habían pasado cuatro años desde el inicio de la pandemia Covid-19 era el momento también de reflexionar alrededor de los cambios generados en los programas a tenor de las circunstancias pandémicas, de sus permanencias o de aquellos elementos que ya no eran aplicables. Otro de los objetivos era trabajar sobre la evolución de los programas de mayores en las universidades españolas y cómo la nueva ley de universidades o LOSU podía afectar a los mismos. Con ello se pretendía vislumbrar cuál sería el devenir de los programas universitarios de formación de adultos. En último lugar, otro de los objetivos fue dar a conocer y poner en valor los proyectos y prácticas de innovación docente e investigación que los programas de formación sénior realizan periódicamente, enfocados a mejorar sus actividades.

Las jornadas fueron muy fructíferas y se presentaron doce comunicaciones, también se organizaron cuatro ponencias plenarias impartidas por ponentes internacionales y dos mesas de debate. Desafortunadamente, la última jornada de celebración del encuentro se vio afectada por la DANA sufrida en la tarde/noche del día 29 de octubre y la prudencia nos obligó a

reducir dicha jornada para que nuestros participantes pudieran regresar a sus casas sin incidencias.

Esta circunstancia traumática y trágica de nuevo hizo evidente la vulnerabilidad de las personas mayores. Precisamente la experiencia en los últimos cincuenta años de estos programas a nivel internacional ha hecho palpable que aún hay que avanzar en la formación en salud y seguridad para este segmento de la población, ya no solo por las pandemias, también por otra amenaza visible en el horizonte del cambio climático. Y son desafíos urgentes ante problemas aún desconocidos, que generan mucha incerteza, pero sobre los que aún hay que investigar y difundir una cultura de la responsabilidad.

En las conferencias plenarias se incidió en la necesidad de realizar más formación sobre los derechos de protección de las personas mayores, por ejemplo, respetando su ritmo y su temporalidad. Lo vemos de forma evidente en aspectos como la digitalización creciente de nuestra sociedad, donde la población mayor no puede adaptarse a la velocidad de los cambios. Al mismo tiempo, se abordaron los distintos modelos de universidades para mayores: el modelo histórico donde se generan programas en las universidades, permitiendo la relación intergeneracional; el modelo británico como universidades populares o de la experiencia, y el modelo chino, donde las universidades de la tercera edad son programas nacionales del gobierno o de las provincias, totalmente subvencionados y organizados desde el aparato estatal. Estos encuentros para la reflexión sobre los programas también han sufrido una evolución, pues si en los primeros cuarenta años se reunían en la AEPUM o en la AIUTA (Asociación Internacional de Universidades de la Tercera Edad) para compartir sus experiencias, a partir del 2020, las universidades se organizan para hacer proyectos innovadores. Por ejemplo, uno de los ámbitos pioneros en este sentido ha sido los mayores y el turismo, en el que se está investigando muy activamente en los últimos años.

Más aún si cabe porque estos programas ponen en evidencia el creciente número relativo de población que supera los setenta y cinco años en general, y particularmente aquel que ya está en edad de jubilación. Esto ha supuesto un crecimiento constante del alumnado que se matricula en la

formación sénior y, por tanto, nos enfrenta a problemas en la gestión de este tipo de programas de formación. Por tanto, es evidente que hay que repensar los criterios de admisión a dichos programas, la adaptación de los espacios, los niveles académicos y, como no, los recursos financieros. Por ello, este encuentro y otros, así como la investigación en formación para adultos ha de ser tanto cuantitativa como cualitativa, teniendo en cuenta tanto estas cifras como los deseos de los estudiantes de tener una buena educación. Hay que responder a la creciente necesidad de la población sénior de incrementar su calidad de vida, que pasa precisamente por enfrentarse al aislamiento, al deterioro físico y mental mediante la formación. En este sentido, cabe también investigar sobre los conceptos psicológicos de calidad de vida, que son diferentes según las distintas concepciones socioeconómicas.

Entre los cambios en los programas de mayores en las últimas décadas que se han evidenciado a través de las comunicaciones, cabe destacar la cada vez más amplia participación de las mismas en los programas de intercambios nacionales y proyectos de movilidad Erasmus+. A ello se dedicó una mesa redonda en la que precisamente se puso el énfasis en el valor de estos programas para el crecimiento del sentimiento de ciudadanía europea, la mejora de las competencias digitales, la profundización por parte del alumnado en el conocimiento de la cultura y el patrimonio europeos, así como la magnífica experiencia para adquirir habilidades blandas por parte de los alumnos sénior participantes. También el tema de la sostenibilidad y de las tareas éticas en la formación de adultos estuvo presente, es decir, la inclusividad, la equidad, la accesibilidad, la adaptabilidad, para avanzar en la calidad de la formación en competencias de los estudiantes sénior.

El uso de las nuevas tecnologías y especialmente el de la Inteligencia Artificial también centró en gran parte el debate en las comunicaciones. Otros temas, más habituales en la investigación sobre la formación de estudiantado sénior, como las tendencias demográficas o los cambios en los programas, también fueron objeto de estudio. Desde luego, todas las intervenciones destacaron el aprendizaje como uno de los ejes centrales de la mejora en la calidad de vida de la población sénior, además de la interacción social y la cooperación intergeneracional. Este volumen es el resultado

precisamente de una gran parte de las intervenciones que centraron dicho encuentro. Esperamos que sea de interés y aumente el conocimiento de la educación para personas adultas.

Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya
Universitat Jaume I



Figura 1. Foto grupal de la celebración del XVIII Encuentro de la AEPUM, 28 a 30 de octubre de 2024

SENIORS IN EDUCATION, FACTORS AND CHANGES

PHDR. NADEŽDA HRAPKOVÁ, PHD.

Project Manager, EFOS president
Centre for Continuing Education at Comenius University
Bratislava, Slovakia

Email: nadezda.hrapkova@uniba.sk; nadezda.hrapkova@gmail.com

RESUMEN

El texto presenta las prácticas del trabajo con estudiantes mayores en la universidad y los resultados de la investigación realizada en UTA, Universidad Comenius de Bratislava en comparación con los socios del proyecto Erasmus+ de otras instituciones europeas de alto nivel. El artículo describe factores muy importantes en el proceso educativo de los estudiantes mayores. Se centra en la motivación para el estudio en la vejez, las barreras en la educación y los obstáculos en el uso de las tecnologías digitales por parte de los adultos mayores. Las actividades educativas pueden ayudar a las personas mayores a aceptar las nuevas condiciones en una sociedad cambiante y a superar las barreras y el aislamiento social. El envejecimiento activo es un fenómeno muy importante que todas las comunidades y sociedades deberían apoyar. El artículo describe el papel de los estudiantes mayores y su posible participación en la educación intergeneracional. El uso de las tecnologías digitales por parte de las personas mayores puede traer ciertos problemas que se pueden superar a través de programas de capacitación y educación. La investigación centrada en las competencias digitales de las personas mayores apunta a la necesidad de animar a las personas mayores a utilizar las TIC con más frecuencia y en qué categorías romper las barreras y sus límites.

Palabras clave

Calidad de vida, educación senior, aislamiento social, motivación y barreras para el estudio, barreras y obstáculos en el uso de las nuevas tecnologías,

roles de los estudiantes senior, aprendizaje intergeneracional, Universidades de la Tercera Edad (UTA), Federación Europea de Estudiantes Mayores en las Universidades (EFOS).

ABSTRACT

The article presents practices from the work with done older students at the university and the results of research conducted at UTA (University of the Third Age) at Comenius University Bratislava in comparison with partners in the Erasmus+ project at other European higher education institutions. The article describes very important factors in the educational process of older students. It focuses on motivation to study in later life, barriers to education, and obstacles to the use of digital technologies by older adults. Educational activities can help the elderly accept new conditions in a changing society, and overcome barriers and social isolation. Active ageing is a very important phenomenon that every community and society should support. The article describes the roles of older students and their possible involvement in intergenerational education. The use of digital technologies by seniors can bring certain problems that can be overcome through training and educational programmes. Research focused on the digital skills of seniors points to the need to encourage older people to use ICT more often and in which areas to break down barriers and boundaries.

Key words

Quality of life, senior education, social isolation, motivation and barriers to study, barriers and obstacles to the use of new technologies, roles of senior students, intergenerational learning, Universities of the Third Age (UTA), European Federation of Older Students at universities (EFOS).

INTRODUCTION

We live in times characterized by huge demographic, technological, scientific and economic changes worldwide. These changes drastically affect people's lifestyle and conditions, and change society. The number of older adults is steadily increasing, and there is a both a social and personal need to be active. The elderly want to actively take advantage of the opportunities that ageing offers. People used to be active in their youth usually continue to be active after retirement. The educational needs of seniors are very varied, but their fulfilment always results in the individual's personal growth. The knowledge obtained in this study helps older people to solve their problems, to discover new value systems, new philosophies of life, and contributes to increasing their social activity.

The general areas of development of seniors are the same as those of non-seniors: physical, cultural, psychological and intellectual (Čornaničová, R., 2007).

Kilian (2020) states that "older people function better in old age (appreciate their worth, feel satisfied, are happier) if they continue to have a high level of activity from middle age - which is an essential aspect of successful, active progress over time. According to this theory, activity (social, physical, intellectual) is a type of positive adaptation to a new situation that increases the quality of an individual's existence by functioning and coping with new challenges". This means that the aging process takes place evenly because older people remain active.

Why it is necessary to offer older people the appropriate programmes for active aging?

Older adults have considerably more time when they retire. If an older person is unable to find an activity that fulfils them, they are likely to become depressed and isolated. For many of them, becoming old also means becoming lonely. They should not retreat into loneliness, but instead attempt to maintain contact with their friends and relatives. Loneliness and social isolation are problems experienced by elderly people today. In contemporary society, it is not surprising to see an older person living alone. This applies particularly to women, as they live longer than men.

Social isolation among people living alone takes the form of an individual not being involved in family affairs or collective activities. Someone who has been accustomed to satisfying their his individual requirements during their life usually continues with the same activities. The students at the UTA are more immune to these problems. We recognised the importance of education in combating loneliness, and in using education as a way to prevent isolation among the elderly. It also improves their quality of life and prevents them from becoming depressed, and it helps those who feel alone in their apartments or retirement homes.

1. QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life has had different evaluation parameters and many dimensions at every stage of human civilisation. The representation of goals and ways in which the quality of life is assured might be different for each person at different times and in different situations. According to Čornaničová, (2005) “basically, we have:

- Socio-economic concepts of quality of life, focusing primarily on the material conditions of life. The indicators are *income*, *expenses*, quality and standard of *housing*, standards of *health* and *social services*, the *cultural and social life* of the community, *educational opportunities*, etc.).
- Psychological concepts of the quality of life, i.e., quality of life as seen by some people’s individual view of their *own satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life.*”.

One of the most common efforts in people’s lives is to guarantee some degree of comfort and satisfaction. Achieving this aim is usually associated with the concept of quality of life. Individual quality of life is increased by planned physical and mental activities and active lifestyles. One of the opportunities for increasing the quality of life is lifelong learning. Leisure

activities involving learning can be a factor delaying the onset of changes related to ageing, and in most cases, increasing the quality of life. When we asked senior students if studying at UTA improves their quality of life, 97% answered in the affirmative (Hrapková, N. 2013).

The EFOS (European Federation of Older Students at Universities) was established as a European non-governmental organisation in 1990. It is registered in Austria, and its presidency is held by Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia (<https://www.efos-europa.eu/>).

The central aim of EFOS is to protect the interests the interests of older students at universities in Europe. In addition to other goals, it focuses on:

1. Promoting the access of older people to education at the highest level at Universities of the Third Age / Universities for older people and at Senior academies;
2. Identifying possibilities for using the skills of older students:
 - to give lectures to groups of older people or intergenerationally;
 - to transfer knowledge to younger generations;
 - to search for isolated seniors and encourage them to join further education;
 - to work voluntarily within senior communities;
 - to do research and undertake projects;
 - to share their own knowledge and life experience.

2. SPECIFICITIES AND CONDITIONS FOR STUDY.

What are the functions of senior education? Čornaničová, R. (2007) defined them as follows:

- I. Primary orientation:
 - Educational function (to obtain knowledge and information)

- Cultural and cultivating function (personal development in the field of free time activities).
- Soci- psychological function (to maintain an appropriate quality of life in social relationships and psychological development).

II. Specific orientation:

- Preventive function (education which influences the ageing process)
- Anticipation (how to prepare myself for changing my lifestyle)
- Rehabilitation (how to maintain my physical and mental health)
- Adaptation (balance between the environment and the individual)
- Stimulative function (development of interests, needs and abilities)
- Communicative function (active communication within the environment)
- Compensation (compensation for the loss of social contacts and retirement)".

The specificities that must be respected in seniors' education include an appropriate motivation of senior students; respecting the level of their knowledge and rich practical experience; using logical memory rather than mechanical memory, and active participation of senior students in the educational process. Older students wish to share their knowledge and experience, want to show that they have understood the lecture and have their own opinions which they want to discuss, and want to express their interests, among other issues.

Why learn?

930 respondents in the EduSenNet project (Hrapková, N. et al., 2017) state that Lifelong Learning not only slows the ageing process and stimulates brain activity, but also that LLL helps them:

- cope better with everyday life; live independently for as long as possible;
- understand technological progress (new media, computers, mobile phones);
- remain actively engaged in social life;
- have conversations, especially with younger generations (children and grandchildren);
- understand globalisation to obtain information (especially about politics and society);
- maintain their mental health and curiosity;
- talk to others, meet interesting people and develop oneself.

The extension of life and changes in the life expectancy has also had a huge impact on the changes in adult education. The term “life expectancy” refers to the number of years a person can expect to live. By this definition, life expectancy is based on an estimate of how old an average member of a particular population group will be when they die (Ortiz-Ospina, E. 2017)”. The extension of human life places senior studies in a new situation. Older students do not leave university - they complete the study cycles – and continue and choose new subjects for study. This brings intergenerational learning into the UTA, when third-age students (60+) meet elderly students over 75 (fourth-age students). The highest life expectancies were recorded in Spain (84.0 years), Italy (83.8 years) and Malta (83.6 years) in 2022 (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>).

2.1. FREE TIME

Seniors that are professionally inactive have a great deal of free time. “The problem of free time management is a subject of interest for both seniors themselves and the community around them. Free time may be treated as a space to engage in hobbies, search for new forms of activity, but also as a time of forced inactivity. Free time management is also determined by a range of other factors such as health, material status, education level, attractiveness of activities, habits concerning spending free time, and many more (Zraček, M. 2014)”.

One way to improve their physical condition is to include seniors in various activities which will permit them to prolong their good health until late old age and take part in their family, social, and religious life and in the local community. One of these possibilities is learning activities. The education of seniors is widely known not only to mitigate the decline in cognitive abilities and mental acuity, but also contributes to human development in many areas (Fabis, A. 2014).

Today, many older people have higher expectations for the quality of their life in retirement. Many retired seniors are economically independent, well-educated and are relatively healthy in physical and psychological terms. They expect to continue their free time activities, and have high quality leisure time rather than passively spending their free time. These seniors have higher aspirations, which certainly include further education.

There are many reasons to take part in learning activities at UTA. The EduSenNet (Educational Senior Network) project performed an international research study on this subject. The results were as follows:

Table 1: Hrapková, N., Grunwald, K. et al. (authors): Erasmus+ Project, Educational Senior Network, 2017, <http://edusennet.efos-europa.eu/>

| | <i>Slovakia</i> | <i>Sweden</i> | <i>Germany</i> | | <i>Netherlands</i> | <i>Czech Republic</i> | <i>Spain</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Bratislava | Uppsala | Magdeburg | Chemnitz | Groningen | Brno | Alicante |
| Getting new information | 60.6% | 35% | 97.5% | 41.73% | 47% | 74% | 66.02% |
| Meeting people, new contacts | 48.6% | 24% | 65.0% | 23.55% | 10% | 41% | 58.25% |
| Overcoming isolation | 18.3% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 14% | 19.42% |
| Being more active | 45.9% | 13% | 35.0% | 0% | 17% | 36.6% | 48.54% |

| | <i>Slovakia</i> | <i>Sweden</i> | <i>Germany</i> | | <i>Netherlands</i> | <i>Czech Republic</i> | <i>Spain</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Bratislava | Uppsala | Magdeburg | Chemnitz | Groningen | Brno | Alicante |
| Improving quality of life | 48.6% | 24% | 17.5% | 30.58% | 21% | 52% | 33.01% |
| Other | 3.67% | 1% | 12.5% | 1.24% | 5% | 1.8% | 5.83% |
| No response | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2.89% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

2.2. MOTIVATION TO STUDY

Motivation has a major influence on adult education. A very strong motivating factor is the individual’s interest, which is often based on their previous level of knowledge, the desire for self-realization, and their level of aspiration. Motivation to study is a pedagogical-psychological category that influences the decision to study and the reason for studying.

Various models categorising, understanding and classifying older people’s motivation to study have been developed. Many of them are related to older people’s personality, attitudes, and expectations, as well as factors related to the current situation and the organisation of the courses. The most important motivation for participation is the desire to learn and for personal development and social contact.

Studies and participation in courses are opportunities for development, as well as a way of enhancing older people’s position in a changing society.

In 1998, the main motivation to undertake educational activities was “Interest in expanding knowledge in a different field to their professional field”. Meanwhile, in 2017 it was “self-development” and “the acquisition of practical skills”. In twenty years, we moved on to a different level of motivational needs, which are interests in practical skills and self-realisation.

Table 2: Hrapková, N.: Research at the UTA in 1998 - 414 respondents, Erasmus+ Project EduSenNet, 329 respondents in 2017, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

| Motivation for study | 1998 | Motivation for study | 2017 |
|--|-------|---|------|
| Interest in expanding knowledge in a different field | 64% | To gain knowledge and obtain background information | 9% |
| Interest in expanding knowledge in my own field | 17% | To learn practical skills | 27% |
| Need to increase the knowledge necessary for my profession | 20% | For further development of myself | 33% |
| Quality of free time: | 45% | To fill my free time usefully | 17% |
| Desire to study at university: | 29% | To satisfy a wish to study at university | 4% |
| Need for social contact: | 27.5% | To meet other people with similar interests | 10% |

The learning needs of older students are always changing. As we know many institutions frequently innovate in their range of courses and educational activities, in our research, we asked the seniors “how they look for learning opportunities”.

Table 3: Hrapková, N., Grunwald, K. et al. (authors): Erasmus+ Project, Educational Senior Network, 2017, <http://edusennet.efos-europa.eu/>

| | <i>Slova- kia</i> | <i>Swe- den</i> | <i>Germany</i> | | <i>Nether- lands</i> | <i>Czech R.</i> | <i>Spain</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Brati- slava 109 | Upp- sala 146 | Magde- burg 49 | Chem- nitz 109 | Gronin- gen 135 | Brno 227 | Alicante 103 |
| Friends, family | 60% | 21% | 86.7% | 25.26% | 61% | 65% | 73.79% |
| Advertis- ing | 8.5% | 25% | 6.7% | 13.68% | 47% | 5.8% | 9.71% |

| | <i>Slova- kia</i> | <i>Swe- den</i> | <i>Germany</i> | | <i>Nether- lands</i> | <i>Czech R.</i> | <i>Spain</i> |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Brati- slava 109 | Upp- sala 146 | Magde- burg 49 | Chem- nitz 109 | Gronin- gen 135 | Brno 227 | Alicante 103 |
| Internet | 30.3% | 16% | 20% | 10.53% | 69% | 34% | 26.21% |
| Newspa- per | 27.5% | 25% | 15.6% | 16.84% | 42% | 12.8% | 25.24% |
| TV / Radio | 32.1% | 6% | 2.2% | 16.84% | 0% | 11.5% | 18.45% |
| Other | 2.6% | 5% | 0% | 3.68% | 0% | 3% | 12.62% |
| I don't know | 3.67% | 2% | 0% | 13.16% | 0% | 1.8% | 14.56% |

2.3. BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES TO STUDY

The barriers are defined as various limitations and difficulties in the process of learning and self-education, i.e., the factors rendering it difficult or impossible to implement the idea of lifelong learning in formal, informal and non-formal education (Jurczyk-Romanowska, and Zakowicz. 2015, p. 196).

In the last few years, we have found that the distance from the study premises is a major barrier to study. We have recently observed that the quality and range of courses available does not influence a senior citizen's decision to travel further from the city center.

Characteristics of elderly people who do not learn:

- People with no interest in learning;
- People with problems which cannot be mitigated (people with disabilities or health issues, etc.);
- People with barriers that can be overcome (transport, childcare, etc.);
- People who do not feel strong enough to learn, lacking self-confidence;
- Elderly people who need encouragement and support to make the decision;

- Isolated people with psychological problems (fear of new people, new environments, new situations, new commitments);
- Elderly people with different interests and obligations.

What do you consider to be the possible obstacles to lifelong learning?

Our research and studies have shown the following barriers to the decision to study or continue studies at the UTA.

External factors:

- Not enough UTAs
- Limit on places at the UTA.
- Lack of information about the opportunities available - not enough advertising.
- Nobody prepares us for retirement and how to take advantage of free time.
- Low pensions / income
- Lack of public transport to reach the UTA.
- Time taken up with housework or family (taking care of grandchildren, husband).
- Lack of acceptance by the family.

Internal factors:

- Advanced age and health problems.
- Commitments, lack of time.
- Lack of basic skills.
- Lack of interest and motivation.
- They don't know the value of lifelong learning.
- They think that learning is something for younger people and adults do not need to learn.

What are the roles of older students?

Older students are not only students, but often fulfil other roles at the university, including:

1. Leaders of student groups.
2. Speakers at conferences and lecturers in the educational process for seniors.
3. Guides for guests and visitors.
4. Initiators of political campaigns.
5. Participants and researchers in project tasks.
6. Editors of student newsletters, project booklets, etc.
7. Volunteers working in communities.
8. Artists: painters, singers, dancers.
9. Leaders of national and international organisations.
10. Heads of Seniors / Alumni Clubs at UTA.

For example, members of the European Federation of Older Students - EFOS (<https://www.efos-europa.eu/>) and older students have worked as initiators of political campaigns, when they prepared:

- The EFOS Declaration to support human rights for older people
- Letters to the European Parliament to promote education for seniors and European projects for all age groups.
- Work in the Committee on Ageing at the United Nations in Vienna.
- A manifesto to support education for seniors at the national and regional level, etc.

3. INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION

Educational activities oriented towards older age groups have their own specific characteristics, making them in many respects significantly different from the educational processes aimed at younger generations. This difference

is conditioned by the different age groups involved, and to a considerable degree it is also connected with differing conceptions of life and human experience among younger and older age groups. In our practice, we have encountered several cases of intergenerational education. This led us to conduct a survey under the auspices of the UTA Association in Slovakia on the possibilities of creating programmes involving both the younger generation of students at universities and older students. We selected these results from our survey. The intergenerational research undertaken by Slovak UTAs involved 1,447 respondents (28% male, 72% female), of whom 62.9% were young university students and 37.1% were older students (Moravčíková, D., 2014).

We asked the respondents:

1. Would you prefer joint educational programmes for young people and seniors / all generations together?

| | Young students: | Older students: |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Yes: | 46.2% | 42.9% |
| No: | 22.5% | 20.3% |
| I don't know: | 31.3% | 36.8% |

2. Which subject would you like to study?

Table 4: Moravčíková, D, Research of Association of UTA in Slovakia, 2014

| <i>Study subjects</i> | <i>Young students</i> | <i>Older students</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Healthy lifestyle | 42.2% | 24.9% |
| History and ethnology | 36.4% | 15.3% |
| Information technologies | 35.4% | 20.1% |
| Language learning | 27.0% | 14.4% |
| Law | 9.1% | 4.8% |
| Theology | 18.5% | 10.9% |
| Civic education | 27.4% | 12.5% |

| <i>Study subjects</i> | <i>Young students</i> | <i>Older students</i> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Gardening, housing, family economy | 27.0% | 8.1% |
| Other | 0.2% | 2.0% |

3. What do you think could be the benefits of intergenerational learning?

Table 5: Moravčíková, D, Research of Association of UTA in Slovakia, 2014

| <i>Response</i> | <i>Young students</i> | <i>Older students</i> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Better communication and relationships between generations | 75.3% | 72.4% |
| Increase in mutual tolerance between generations (in the family and society) | 62.0% | 66.5% |
| Transmission of social heritage (Patterns of behaviour, values, etc.). | 50.6% | 50.8% |
| Mutual informal learning | 37.0% | 27.3% |
| Influence on the selection of professional orientation | 15.0% | 7.2% |
| Other | 0.1% | 1.1% |

4. What do you consider to be the possible obstacles to intergenerational learning?

Table 6: Moravčíková, D, Research of Association of UTA in Slovakia, 2014

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Young students</i> | <i>Older students</i> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ineffective communication | 24.6% | 23.2% |
| Different educational needs | 59.8% | 49.0% |
| Different attitudes to education and to the value of education | 40.4% | 38.7% |
| Unsatisfactory intergenerational relations | 18.7% | 29.1% |
| Differing opinions | 54.1% | 35.4% |

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Young students</i> | <i>Older students</i> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Different speed of acquiring and understanding information | 56.7% | 50.5% |
| Other | 0.0% | 0.9% |

One of the objectives of intergenerational education is to experience innovative practices, methods and activities of intergenerational learning in formal, non-formal and informal education. There are no specific restrictions on the target of intergenerational education, except those relating to a consistent choice of beneficiaries regarding the educational and social goals to be achieved. Integration between generations in education can be a major source of educational, emotional and social support for both generations - both older and younger.

4. DIGITAL SKILLS AND EDUCATION IN THE ELDERLY

”The planners of tomorrow’s society need not only to take into account whether a particular target group uses the internet or not, but also why, how and how often they do it and how experienced they are. Questions like this are also relevant when U3As are developing new programmes to offer its members digital support. Age is the key factor in explaining why part of the European population does not connect daily. But there are also other factors:

- Gender - a majority are women.
- Income - a majority have low income levels.
- Place of residence – a majority live in rural areas.
- Education - a majority have low levels of education.

Other factors observed are: marital status / being single; being unemployed or on sick leave; skills, etc (Odin, B. 2022)”.