

Glossary

Active ageing

Active ageing is a political concept based on theories like: theory of activity in old age. A life-course approach to learning for active ageing stresses the importance of all ages and stages of life and acknowledges the intergenerational context within which individuals live. It recognises that ageing and learning occur within a broad life process, and that cultural experiences earlier in life shape later experiences, decisions and outcomes. A life-course approach also emphasises that events that matter to individuals in later life may not necessarily be best ranked in chronological order – most recent events are not necessarily the most important.

Ageing

Ageing is viewed as a process going on from the minute we are born. It is composed of evolution and devolution processes. It is a lifelong process, going on from cradle to grave.

Ageing population

An ageing population is defined as a population in which the number of elderly (65+) is increasing relative to the number of 20-64 year olds. This phenomenon occurs when the average age of a country or region rises due to rising life expectancy and/or declining birth rates. Every month more than a million people turn 60. The world is ageing rapidly. The number of people aged 65 and over will double as a proportion of the global population, from 7% in 2000 to 16% in 2050. By then, there will be more older people than children (aged 0–14 years) in the population for the first time in human history.

Andragogy

In the 18th century the French philosopher Nicolas de Condorcet argued that education should be for all including adults. The term andragogy, as opposed to pedagogy, however, was coined by Alexander Knapp, a German grammar school teacher in the 19th century. Then it was used by the Journal of Adult Education and Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997) in his work of developing a unified system of adult education (The Meaning of Adult Education). The theory of andragogy is based on assumptions that distinguish it from pedagogy or traditional teaching method, shifting the focus from the teacher to the learner, self-directed learning and perspective transformation, etc.

Autonomy

Autonomy in older age means having or keeping independence or freedom of action, rather than being treated as dependent. This competency concerns what is required to be an active older citizen, taking part in activities of benefit to the individual and society. The activities could involve doing voluntary work, or possibly some form of employment or paid work, also it could mean caring work in the family or for others in the community. The community to which an individual contributes can be a family.

Competency

Competency is not about being skilled or knowledgeable. Competencies encompass disciplinary or theoretical knowledge, experiential knowledge and skills validated by their use in real life situations. A brick layer may be skilled in laying bricks but becomes competent only when he is able to reflect upon his experience and generalise his experience to the extent that it can be argued and transmitted. This word has different meanings. In relation to active ageing, it means what is required for older people to live and participate actively within communities and society. Although competency is often considered in terms of abilities of individuals, in this project there is a society competency level, which can be considered at least equally important. For example the 'health' competency for active ageing not only requires individual behaviours which promote health, but also social structures such as healthcare systems that support older people to manage their health.

Demography

This is the study of human populations, using statistics to examine such aspects as the size, growth, structure and distribution of groups of people. Demographic analysis can be applied to a particular population group such as men and women aged over 65, and can take account of changes across geographical space and across time, in relation to dimensions such as birth, death, migration, and ageing.

Discrimination

Making a distinction on the basis what cannot be changed: race, age, looks. Discriminatory traditions, policies, ideas, practices, and laws exist in many countries and institutions

Education in later life

Education in later-life means organised and target oriented learning of different groups of older people.

Empowerment

Empowering older people means making them gain psychological, political and economic power through education as to take decisions.

Later life

The term was coined by Peter Jarvis and conference participants in 1995 in Ulm. Later-life refers to different stages of life and to different groups of older people: older workers, people about to get retired, retirees who are in a dynamic process between work, retirement and old age, older people in institutional care or in general dependent older people. Policy makers refer to people who are at this stage of life calling them "older people", "older adults" and seniors or, now less frequently, "third agers".

Learning

Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. Learning happens if and when behaviour changes (activity, thinking, emotions, etc.). It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve an increase in skills, knowledge or understanding, a deepening of values or the capacity to reflect. Effective learning will lead to change, development and a desire to learn more.

Learning by trial and error

A person learns by trial and error if he occasionally tries out new strategies, rejecting choices that are erroneous. Learning by trial and error may be very creative but it is time consuming.

Learning competency

The learning competency concerns what is required to continue to learn in older age, and to learn in a way that is relevant for older age. This might include formal and/or informal learning, and could involve a wide range of possibilities including learning skills and knowledge, learning something creative, or learning new technology like e-technology (computers and the internet).

Leisure time

Leisure time is time spent away from business, work, job hunting, domestic chores, and education. It also excludes time spent on necessary activities such as eating and sleeping.

Lifelong learning

This is the on-going pursuit of learning for personal or professional reasons throughout life and in a range of situations. Learning can take place not only in formal settings but also in non-formal learning groups, through daily interactions and in a wide range of environments. The Lifelong Learning Programme has been a European funding programme which has supported education and training for all age groups across Europe.

Motivation

Motivation shapes and encourages our behaviour. It can be extrinsic or intrinsic (inner). Motivation is a concept, which became popular with the development of marketing theories. It encompasses a number of elements like needs, aspirations, readiness to be active, emotions, knowledge etc.

Non-formal education

Non-formal education is education which is structured, has aims but privileges various methods concerning the accruing knowledge. It is closer to life than formal education.

Multi-dimensional ageing

Ageing is always multi-dimensional (biological, social, psychological, cultural dimension) and should be approached as such.

Old age

Old age is a period of human life, by not means just a waiting room for those who are getting closer to death. Old age is also a social construct, a matter of tacit agreement in each single society.

Public campaigning

Nongovernmental organisations cannot do without public campaigning. Namely it is not enough to work for a certain deprived social group, but there is also a need to mobilize public support, influence behavioural changes, and set a local political agenda. Public campaigning requires research and relies on public media.

Socialisation

Socialisation is a process shaping self, resulting from social experiences and interactions.

Social justice, social fairness

Social justice is the fair and just relation between the individual and society

Stereotype

A *stereotype* is a preconceived notion, especially about a group of people. Stereotyped thoughts or beliefs may or may not accurately reflect reality.

Study circle

is a format and method in adult education with shared responsibility of the learning process. They can be led by all members or by animator with the help of mentor. Study circles were initiated in Sweden and in the States. Slovenian study circles were started at Slovenian Third Age University and were developed to their fullest extent by Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. Slovenian study circles have both cognitive and activity targets. Study circles use written sources of knowledge.

Structuring time

Older people need to structure their time, to find ways to relate to other people. Education over a longer period of time is one of them. Even if an older person has only one activity a week, all other activities get structure around this one. All people need to have targets coming from structured time.

Transformative learning

Older adult education is transformative in nature, changing older learners' attitudes, values, standpoints. Transformative learning theory says that the process of "perspective transformation" has three dimensions: psychological (changes in understanding of the self), convictional (revision of belief systems), and behavioral (changes in lifestyle). An important part of transformative learning is for individuals to change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs.