

Experience
with seniors' education
at the UTA in Zvolen

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When he / she will become
senior / retired?

In his / her

50-ies?

60-ies?

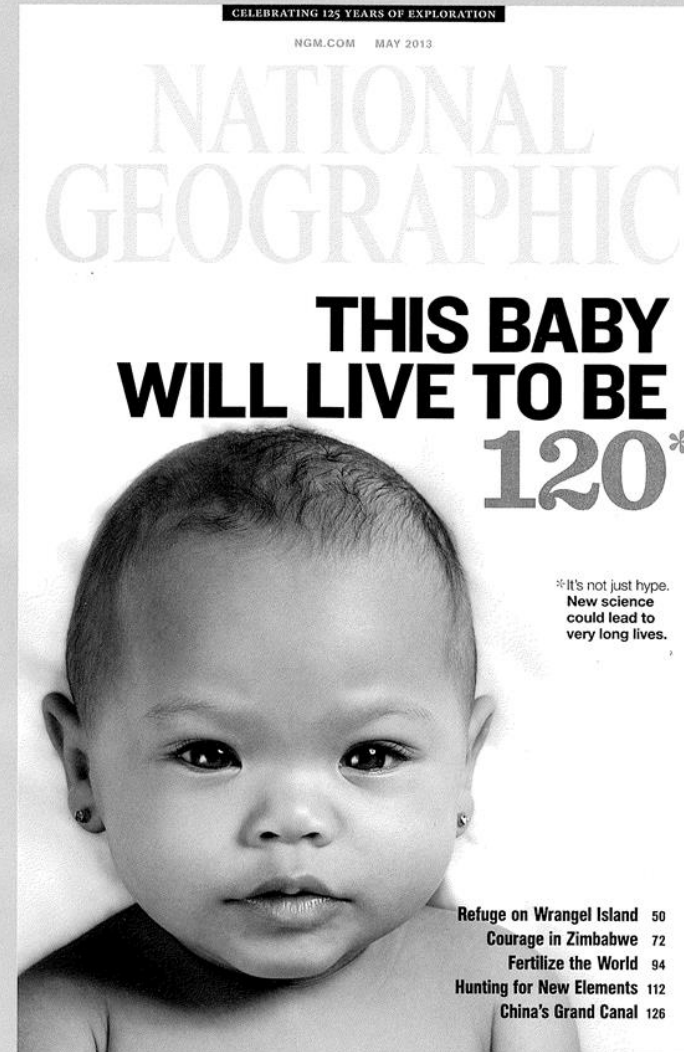
80-ies?

Or even 100-ies?

What will be IT like by then?

What does „life-long“ in his / her case mean?

What will be considered knowledge society by then?



UTA's mission

To improve seniors' quality of life

What determines quality of life?

- environment indicators (ukazovatele životného prostredia)
- health and illnesses indicators (ukazovatele zdravia a choroby)
- personal and team security indicators (ukazovatele osobnej a kolektívnej bezpečnosti)
- housing level indicators (ukazovatele úrovne bývania)
- interpersonal relations indicators (ukazovatele medziľudských vzťahov)
- free-time indicators (ukazovatele voľného času)
- indicators of social and economic characteristics of job (ukazovatele sociálnych i ekonomických charakteristík práce)
- indicators of possibility to participate in management of society (ukazovatele možnosti podielu na riadení spoločnosti)
- civil liberties indicators (ukazovatele občianskych slobôd)
- social security indicators (ukazovatele sociálnych istôt)

(based on Uher I.: Determinanty kvality života seniorov, UPJŠ Košice, 2014)

When the „third age“ begins?

Case study 1

- according to my personal statistics the youngest visitor of IT courses at the University of the third age (UTA) in Zvolen was a woman aged less then 40
 - she started to attend courses together with her mother aged around 60
 - however, she decided to give up lessons soon...
 - she did not speak about her problem and attempted to hide it
 - however, during breaks step by step she started to talk
 - she was divorced because her ex-husband left her with their son who was...
 - ...autist
 - she felt herself alone – that was the reason why she decided to learn at the UTA
 - however, taking care of the son took her all the free time
 - we (whole group of seniors) asked grandma to talk with daugter...: ask the boy (age of 12-13) to come with her to the lesson
 - the boy received his own computer - to play, to spend time...
 - his mother obtained more freedom and she did not feel alone as she did before

When a person becomes „senior“?

- senior = pensioner (?)
 - A pensioner is someone who receives a pension, especially a pension paid by the state to retired people
- senior = retired (?)
 - retired - no longer active in one's work or profession
 - honorably retired from assigned duties and retaining one's title along with the additional title „emeritus“, which does not necessarily imply that one is inactive
 - retired - discharged as too old for use or work, especially with a pension
 - (definitions taken from Lingea Lexicon)
- my UTA students belonged to all of these categories, even to more than those listed above...

Children vs. seniors...

...childhood vs. seniority

- Can a „child“ be a „senior“?
 - many of us are still „children“ while our parents are alive...
- Can a „senior“ be a „child“?
 - with higher age of some people a childhood is coming back...
- child and childhood are often not closely related and the same stands for senior and seniority

About motivation in general

- what motivates students to become engineers, doctors, to become IT-literate...?
 - higher salary
 - obtaining a knowledge
 - honour
 - problems with finding a job (postponing this moment)
 - parents, friends
- what motivates middle-aged people?
 - to keep / preserve a job or to find a better one
 - pressure of „neighbourhood“

About seniors' motivation

- what motivates 65-year old woman to travel 70 kilometers by bus and by train (4 hours in total) to attend 2 hours of IT lessons at the UTA?
- what motivates 80-year old woman to go by foot 3 kilometers in snowy and windy weather to be in time at IT course starting at 7:30 in the morning (she had to wake up probably at 5 o'clock)?
- what motivates husband (83) and his spouse (77) to leave their household and attend the same course as the woman above?
- what motivates lonely IT illiterate people (mostly women, lot of them widows) to become „IT active“?

About seniors' motivation - answers

- to eliminate loneliness
- to be in contact with children and grandchildren
- desire to meet with people of the same age category
- to demonstrate (themselves or others) ability to achieve something
- to forget about his/her illnesses
- (hopefully a little bit) personality of the teacher
- **Totally different motivation implies totally different approach of a teacher when comparing ordinary students or middle aged on one side and seniors on the other one**

Is each senior „educateable“?

Case study 2 (test of my patience No.1)

- profession – famous actor
- age – 71
- during his time spent in spa he decided to improve his IT knowledge
 - within three weeks we spent together daily (including weekdays) 2-4 hours (approx. 50 hours in total)
 - he paid each hour and to have partner (e.g. for emailing) he paid it also for another woman who was interested to attend the course at the same time
- own equipment – the newest MacBook Pro (my notebook was incomparable with it), the newest camera
- he was able with his Mac: to process video, to use Skype
- main problem – he wanted to learn using of computer by heart (by memory) – the same as he did with actor’s roles

How should the teacher act if...?

Case study 3 (test of my patience No.2)

- 7 people (women) in the group
- woman aged of approx. 70 years
- former teacher at primary school (very known and respected teacher)
- at the next job – head of department at local authorities
- for the first lesson she was late more than 20 minutes
- problems:
 - she interrupted me permanently
 - she was practically unable to hold a mouse, to move it, to use its two buttons, to make double click – because of trembling hands
 - she was unable to concentrate to any activity
- reason – she came to the lesson under the influence of alcohol

How should the teacher act if...?

Case study 4

- 8 people in the group
- woman aged of approx. 55 years
- basic education only, able to do only very simple auxiliary work
- without any experience with computer
- after explaining and experiencing even simple activities (using drag and drop, switching the computer off) in a couple of minutes she forgot sequence of steps and asked again and again how to proceed
- on the other hand, an all-out effort to learn and to reach progress was very notable

Which problems do seniors face?

- social exclusion – leaving a job after being retired
- worsening of financial situation, economic insecurity – decrease of income
- loneliness – loss of partner, children left household
- ailing – physical and psychical illnesses (according to WHO „health is a state o complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity“)

Which challenges do seniors face?

- more free time when becoming retired
- keep healthy lifestyle, because health is an ability to respond positively on different challenges in life (environment), e.g. to various troublesome situations which a person has to face (schopnosť pozitívne reagovať na rôzne výzvy života - životného prostredia - t.j. na nepriaznivé situácie, s ktorými sa človek v živote stretáva)
 - (based on Uher I.: Determinanty kvality života seniorov, UPJŠ Košice, 2014)

Recommendations for UTA teacher (1)

- be very-very patient
- do not hurry
- do not raise your voice
- start each course from introducing each student and a teacher as well
- start each course with small present (chocolate, cake...)
- do not forget about events during the course (holidays, birthdays...)
- adapt progress in lessons to the slowest student

Recommendations for UTA teacher (2)

- keep permanent contact with students
- support students with more skills to help students falling behind
- treat each student individually
- think positively and treat seniors in the same way
- keep friendly atmosphere in the whole group
- keep in mind that every meeting is not only lesson but also a social event
- do not forget about social part of meetings

Fulfilling UTA's mission (1)

What does UTA offer to eliminate seniors' problems and support their challenges?

- status of the university („I am university student“ – I am still young)
- university facilities – lecture rooms with necessary equipment, dormitories, dining rooms, gyms
- perfect accessibility (close train and bus stations, availability by speedway from all directions, free own parking, accessibility for disabled persons, close to the city centre, close to hypermarkets)
- internal university information system and public webpages

Fulfilling UTA's mission (2)

What does UTA offer to eliminate seniors' problems and support their challenges?

- support and service joined with studies
- plenty of courses – those interested have lot of options to choose
- qualified teachers
- symbolic fees (not based on profit)
- additional social programme (even international), e.g. international senior olympics, trips (like this one)

