Geragogical principles for the design of education

Geragogy examines how learning processes need to be initiated, managed, and structured in order to achieve a successful outcome.

There have been many research projects with elderly people in which the conditions under learning in old age particularly works well were defined (see Schramek and Stiel 2020; Bubolz- Lutz et.al. 2010; Köster et.al. 2008).

Stiel and Schramek analyzed these projects in order to indicate the following principles (Stiel 2020):

1. Linking reflection, learning, and action:

Even with practice-oriented training, knowledge and technical competence can only be sustainably integrated into one's own action if the subjective meaning has been recognized.

2. Self-determination in the learning process:

The more learners can determine the content, sequence, and method of learning, the better learning works.

3. Equal attitude:

In geragogical forms of learning, symmetrical communication is implemented. Learning facilitators and learners both define themselves as experts in different fields and communicate on equal terms.

4. Learning through experience and exchange:

It is important to build on the experiential knowledge of older learners in order to make it useable for educational processes.

5. Contact, community and being included:

Educational practice shows that learners who feel integrated into a group or an institution report positively on their learning experiences. Thus, learning groups often stay together for years, maintain exchanges with each other, and stay in touch

6. Integration of social space and life contexts:

Technology education should be aligned to life contexts each time.

7. Designing stimulating and safe places of learning:

Learning environments should be designed in such a way that they evoke a feeling of safety, since experiencing safety is a basic need in learning processes.

8. Addressing values in the learning process:

Negative images of age hinder learning.

9. Differentiation in the learning process:

The heterogeneity of age and inter-individual differences should be treated with/faced by diversity and differentiation in the learning process.

Reference:

Bubolz-Lutz, E., Gösken, E., Kricheldorff, C. und Schramek, R. (2010): Geragogik. Bildung und Lernen im Prozess des Alterns. Das Lehrbuch. Stuttgart.

Schramek, R., Stiel. J. (2020): Förderung von Technik-und Medienkompetenz älterer Menschen aus der Perspektive der Geragogik. Expertise zum Achten Altersbericht der Bundesregierung. Berlin.

Summarized and freely translated by Herche-Neves