Older people's views are often ignored in digital skills training, find studies

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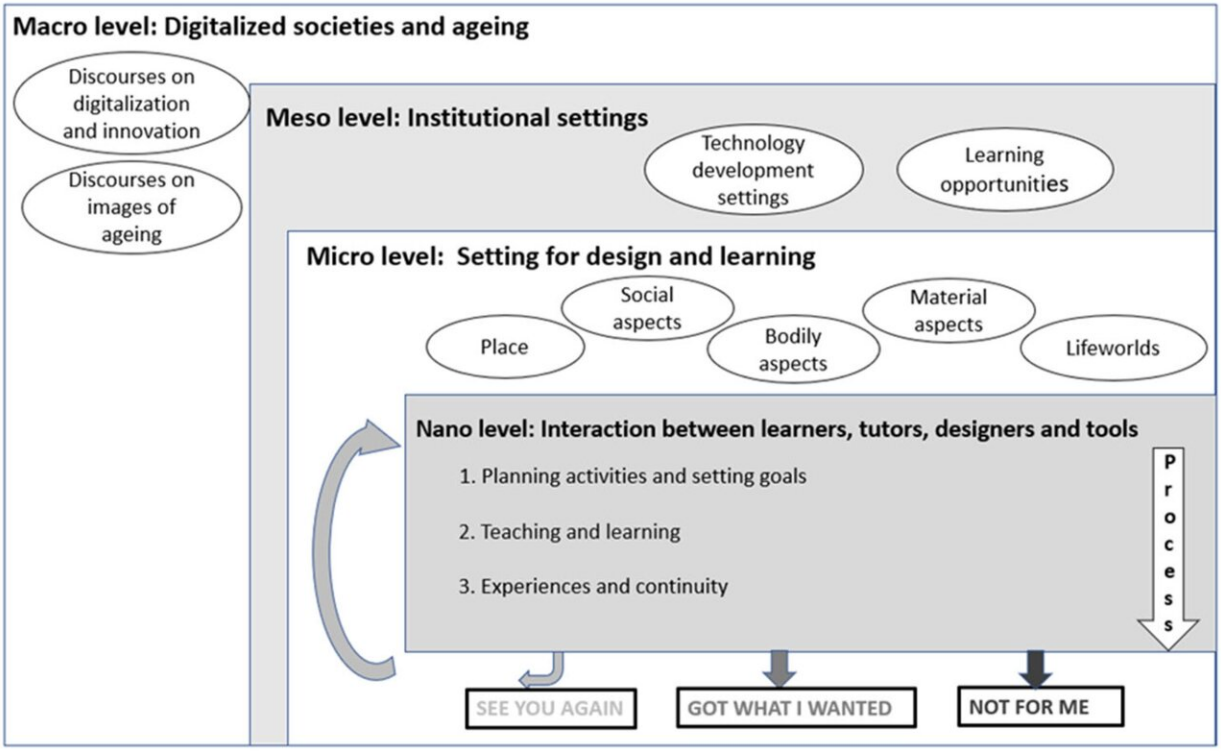

A multilevel model of parameters influencing older adults' appropriation of ICT and acquisition of digital literacy. Credit: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2022). DOI: 10.3390/ijerph192315714

The learning of digital skills is a complex process that is affected by older people's personal needs and motives as well as by societal, institutional, and learning situation related factors, according to recent

international studies exploring older adults' learning of digital skills in Finland, Germany, Austria, Italy and Japan.

"Older people's learning of digital skills needs to be examined holistically so that support measures can be planned and implemented while acknowledging sociocultural contexts, environments, learning settings and instruction practices," Professor Eija Kärnä of the University of Eastern Finland says.

Learning-related factors are similar across Europe

The factors related to older people's learning of digital skills were similar in all countries participating in the study. Yet, it is good to consider the cultural context to sustainably plan and implement forms of support related to digital skills. In particular, permanent and easy-to-access opportunities for learning are needed, which take older people's situation and life circles into consideration.

"When teaching digital skills, instructors should integrate older people's needs, values and wishes in the instructional content and pedagogy," Project Researcher Lotta Aavikko of the University of Eastern Finland notes.

It is important to explore older people's views of digital skills training, as these views will affect their willingness to participate. A better understanding of older people's views also helps to organize training in a manner that is deemed relevant by them. Older people's views should also be better considered in digital innovations, for example.

"Many older adults use digital technology on a daily basis. The views of all citizens, including older people, could be used to a much greater extent in business development," Postdoctoral Researcher Kaisa Pihlainen of the University of Eastern Finland points out.

The research is published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* and *Studies in the Education of Adults*.

More information: Eija Kärnä et al, A Multilevel Model of Older Adults' Appropriation of ICT and Acquisition of Digital Literacy, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2022). DOI: 10.3390/ijerph192315714

Kaisa Pihlainen et al, Older adults' reasons to participate in digital skills learning: An interdisciplinary, multiple case study from Austria, Finland, and Germany, *Studies in the Education of Adults* (2022). DOI: 10.1080/02660830.2022.2133268

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