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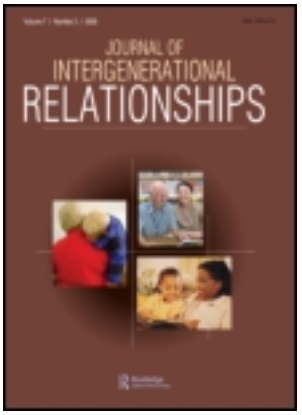

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Building Bridges Across Age and Cognitive Barriers Through Art: College Students' Reflections on an Intergenerational Program With Elders who Have Dementia

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Research

Building Bridges Across Age and Cognitive Barriers Through Art: College Students' Reflections on an Intergenerational Program With Elders who Have Dementia

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The positive impact of intergenerational service learning experience on college students' academic and personal development is well documented. However, it is not clear whether students engaged in such programs with elders who have dementia gain similar benefits. Qualitative analysis of 300 journals written by 59 students participating in the Opening Minds Through Art intergenerational art program for people with dementia revealed that facilitating the creative expressions of elders with dementia resulted in many positive gains for college students. The experience enhanced their academic learning, and they felt rewarded

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for making a difference in the lives of others. Their attitudes toward the elders became more positive, and they were able to build genuine and reciprocal relationships with the elders. In the students' eyes, the elders were artists, teachers, and friends. Further research is needed to analyze the impact of such an intergenerational art program from the perspective of the elders.

KEYWORDS art, creative expression, dementia, intergenerational service learning

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of intergenerational programs that involve college students and older adults has been studied extensively (e.g., Breytspraak, Arnold, & Hogan, 2008; Chase, 2007; Butler & Baghi, 2008; Karasik, Maddox, & Wallingford, 2004; Kovacs & Lee, 2010; Seperson & Hegeman, 2002; Sloniger, 2010; Zucchero, 2011). Although not all studies have reported positive outcomes (Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Parker-Gwin & Mabry, 1998), most have found that intergenerational programs are beneficial. The majority of studies explore the benefits of intergenerational programs for students (e.g., Brown & Roodin, 2001; Dorfman, Murty, Ingram, & Evans, 2002; Dorfman, Murty, Ingram, Evans, & Power, 2004; Murakami, 2009; Whitbourne, Collins, & Skultety, 2001). Fewer studies assess the benefits for elders (e.g., Zucchero, 2010) and some document the benefits for both (e.g., Breytspraak, et al., 2008; Greene & Diehn, 1995; Newman, Lyons, & Onawola, 1985).

Students who participate in intergenerational service learning programs tend to develop more positive attitudes toward elders and appreciate the diversity of older adults as a group, thereby reducing negative stereotypes about aging and older adults (e.g., Balogun, 2002; Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Bringle & Kremer, 1993; Brown & Roodin, 2001; Dorfman et al., 2002; Greene, 1998; Hegeman, Horowitz, Tepper, Pillemer, & Schutz, 2002; Pine, 1997; Watson, Church, Darrville, & Darrville, 1997). Students also develop better self-understanding and become less fearful of their own aging (Brown & Roodin, 2001; Dorfman et al., 2002; Newman et al., 1985). Participating in intergenerational programs gives students an increased sense of self-efficacy and confidence in working with older adults. They also express pride in having made a difference in others' lives and develop stronger senses of civic responsibility (Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Brown & Roodin, 2001; Giles & Eyler, 1994). Students have also reported enhanced academic learning and new insights about careers in aging as a result of engaging in intergenerational programs (Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Brown & Roodin, 2001; McCrea & Smith, 1997; Newman, 1997; Pine, 1997). Finally, participating in intergenerational programs gives students the opportunity to

develop personal friendships with older persons (Breytspraak et al., 2008; McCrea & Smith, 1997).

Although the benefits of intergenerational programs with healthy elders are well documented, the impact of intergenerational programs with elders with dementia is less clearly established. Blieszner and Artale (2001) reported that students placed in an intergenerational program with elders who have dementia expressed difficulties communicating and interacting with the elders. When given adequate training and support, however, students in several small studies that used a structured scrapbooking activity reported improved ability to understand class material, a sense of intimacy with the elders and comfort in working with them, an increased sense of responsibility to the site and the elders, an enhanced sense of self-worth, and they gained insights into their career goals (Fruhauf, Jarrott, Lambert-Shute, 2004; Lambert-Shute, Jarrott, & Fruhauf, 2004). A larger study in Hong Kong involving 117 youth volunteers and 49 elders with early dementia also reported the students' more positive appreciation of the elders as a result of participating in an intergenerational reminiscence program (Chung, 2009). Another study of 18 licensed practical nurses in Sweden who were trained to work with elders who have dementia indicated that nurse trainees, when paired with the same elder over relatively long periods of time (meeting 10–15 times, across 3–29 days, 4–5 hours each time), were able to develop personal relationships that were satisfying to them and promoted the personhood of the elders (Skog, Grafstrom, Negussie, & Winblad, 2000).

Although there are studies that show positive impacts of the arts on the well-being of elders with dementia (e.g., Kinney & Rentz, 2005; McFadden & Basting, 2010; McFadden & Lunsman, 2009; Pepin, Holley, Moore, & Kosloski, 2006; Phillips, Reid-Arndt, & Pak, 2010; Rentz, 2002; Rowe, Fowell, & Montgomery, 2006; Rusted, Sheppard, & Waller, 2006), there is only one study that explored the impacts of an intergenerational service-learning program involving college students, elders with dementia, and the arts (Yamashita, Kinney, & Lokon, 2011). This study showed that participating in an introductory gerontology course, combined with an arts-based service learning experience with elders who have dementia, resulted in students' more positive attitudes toward older people in general, toward working with people who have dementia in particular, and toward community service for older people.

The purpose of this article is to further investigate the impacts of intergenerational programming involving college students, elders with dementia, and the arts. This study explores the following questions: Can students in intergenerational programs with elders who have dementia gain benefits similar to those reported by students who participate in intergenerational programs that involve well elders? More specifically, what do students say they gain from engaging in intergenerational art-making with elders who have moderate to late stages of dementia? And how does art-making contribute to the process of building bridges across age and cognitive barriers?

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Why Art? Psychosocial and Physiological Benefits

There are both psychosocial and physiological advantages to engaging people with dementia in the arts. As explained by Anne Basting and John Killick (2003), "Creative expression is important for everyone, but it is even more important for those with dementia for whom other avenues of self-expression can be severely limited" (p. 8). Basting (2004) further states, "Because there are no right or wrong answers in the creative process, creative activities allow people with dementia to enter from where they are—with memory gaps, word fragments etc.—without judgment" (p. 7).

When people with dementia no longer perceive themselves as productive workers, active community members, or contributing family members, they are often left only with the role of a "sick person" (Basting & Killick, 2003). The arts can provide people with dementia with the new social role of "an artist" as their other social roles are eroded by the disease. The ability to create something original that is aesthetically satisfying gives individuals with dementia a sense of control and mastery of their own life. And the ability to contribute new art to society enhances their sense of confidence and self-esteem.

Lane (2005) reports that creative work alerts parasympathetic arousal, stimulates the hypothalamus, and causes the brain to release endorphins and other neurotransmitters. These translate into slower heartbeat, lower blood pressure, slower breathing, balanced blood flow and hormone level, and improved functioning of the immune system in addition to relieving pain and causing the body to go into deep relaxation. Citing findings from neurophysiological research, Lane reports, "Art, meditation, and healing . . . are all associated with similar brainwave patterns and mind-body changes" (p. 123).

As access to rational language is limited by the disease, people with dementia need to rely more on their emotions to connect with the world. Expression through art can foster a closer relationship between elders with dementia and others because the intimacy during the creative process can reveal the self that remains within the person with dementia that may normally be concealed in her or his daily interactions. The arts have the potential to increase communication and socialization among people with dementia as they share the art-making process and products (Allan & Killick, 2000; Basting, 2006; Basting & Killick, 2003).

Weekly participation in creative activities provides social engagement and has been linked to improved cardiovascular, endocrinological, and immunological functioning. The arts provide repeated opportunities for elders to create something new, resulting in a greater sense of control, mastery, and empowerment. This sense of control is experienced as a positive emotion that triggers the brain to send a signal to the immune system to produce more immune system cells that attack tumor cells and infected body cells. Creative expression activities also create sustained challenges and new

experiences that stimulate the development of new dendrites in the brain, improving communication among brain cells (Cohen, 2006).

Miller (2008) reports that brain scans of people with degenerative brain diseases, including various kinds of dementias, reveal that, in some cases, dementia actually enhances rather than detracts from patients' artistic abilities. He concludes that art, for people with dementia, is a way to recognize their strengths rather than their weaknesses. Taken together, these studies suggest strongly that engaging people with dementia in creative arts experiences is worthwhile because it has positive effects on their social, psychological, physiological, and physical well-being.

Theoretical Foundation

When exploring the possibility of building bridges across age and cognitive barriers, we are essentially exploring the potential for genuine, reciprocal relationships in intergenerational programs that integrate elders with dementia and college students. Kitwood's (1997) theory of personhood, which is central to person-centered care, is essential in exploring this potential. Kitwood (1997) defines personhood as "a standing or status that is bestowed upon one human being, by others, in the context of relationship and social being. It implies recognition, respect, and trust" (p. 8). More to the point of this paper, he maintains, "The primary task of dementia care . . . is to maintain personhood in the face of failing of mental powers" (p. 84).

Kitwood (1997) and Post (1995) state the importance of recognizing the personhood of all human beings regardless of mental capacities. They also assert that an overemphasis on the importance of cognition in Western society, which Post refers to as a "hypercognitive world," undermines the importance of the affective aspects of being human. Agreeing with Post, Kitwood writes, "Personhood . . . should be linked far more strongly to feeling, emotion, and the ability to live in relationships, and here people with dementia are often highly competent—sometimes more so than their carers" (p. 10). To Kitwood, the essence for granting people with dementia full membership in the moral community lies in these principles: "the equality/equal worth of all human beings . . . the uniqueness of individuals . . . the necessity of relationships . . . the subjectivity and suffering of individuals . . . the link between personhood and caring . . . [and] the importance of love" (Baldwin & Capstick, 2007, pp. 179–180).

What is Person-Centered Care?

Person-centered care (PCC) is founded on the physicalist notion of what it means to be human, that "every human being, even one who lack capacities, is entitled to have a life" (Fleisher, 1999, p. 309). Person-centered care is the central theme in the culture-change trend inside long-term care (LTC)

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facilities; the philosophy is founded on the belief in the inherent tendency and capacity of human beings to continue to grow and develop throughout life (Kitwood, 1997). In LTC settings, this process of continued growth requires unconditional, positive regard and the empathetic understanding of each and every resident. It implies a complete acceptance of the personhood of all people, regardless of health condition and/or disabilities.

In a LTC setting with a fully applied PCC philosophy of recognition, respect, and trust for people with dementia, the personhood of the staff and volunteers is also bound to be enhanced through meaningful relationships with people with dementia. Malloy and Hadjistavropoulos (2004) write:

> Both the patient and the caregiver have the opportunity to grow authentically through the caring process. In cases of extreme dementia, it may only be the caregiver who is capable to grow—to take this opportunity away from the caregiver by putting emphasis upon institutionalization and frozen roles and procedures is to lessen the authentic possibilities of the health care profession. Moreover, the caregiver finds meaning in his or her authentic relationship with the patient and this "role" (e.g. nurse, physician) also becomes a means through which the caregiver's own personhood is developed and authenticated. (pp. 153–154)

Ronch (2003) sees this dialectic nature of personhood maintenance as "the essential process of mutual personal change in the care giving relationship that defines the process of becoming (continual evolution of the self)" (p. 328). From this perspective, relationships with people with dementia have the potential to provide the cognitively intact partner with opportunities for authentic growth. In other words, in a person-centered context, we are concerned not only with the maintenance of personhood of the people with dementia but also that of the staff/volunteers/caregivers, and these two phenomena affect one another. Cast in this light, it seems possible to establish genuine, reciprocal relationships between people with dementia and college students in intergenerational programs. The intervention described in the following section is designed to maximize the potential development of such relationships.

METHODS

This study analyzed the reflective journals written by students at a Midwest university. These journals were written as they participated in Opening Minds Through Art (OMA), an intergenerational art program for people with dementia. OMA promotes the social engagement, autonomy, and dignity of people with dementia through the experience of creative self-expression. The program was founded in 2007 based on a growing body of empirical evidence

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that creative expression improves the physical and psychological well-being of people with dementia (Kinney & Rentz, 2005; Pepin, Holley, Moore, & Kosloski, 2006; Rentz, 2002: Rowe, Fowell, & Montgomery, 2006; Rusted, Sheppard, & Waller, 2006). OMA's mission is "to build bridges across age and cognitive barriers through art," hence the title of this article. It is grounded in person-centered ethics described earlier and has a specific methodology that ensures failure-free creative experiences. The program goals are to: (a) promote the social engagement, autonomy, and dignity of people with dementia by providing creative self-expression opportunities; (b) provide staff and volunteers with opportunities to build close relationships with people with dementia; (c) show the public the creative self-expression capacities of people with dementia through exhibitions of their artwork; and (d) contribute to the scholarly literature on dementia care and the arts.

During the data collection phase of this study (2009–2010), this intergenerational weekly art program was implemented at two continuing care retirement communities. As many as a dozen people with moderate to late staged dementia (referred to as "artists") did art with the assistance of trained staff members and university student volunteers who worked with them on a one-to-one basis. Students were partnered with the same elder for the entire semester. They spent approximately 90 minutes together on a weekly basis across 10–12 weeks. The art-making sessions culminated in a gallery exhibition at the end of each semester. The exhibition celebrated the artists' accomplishments; at the same time, it taught the public about the creative capacities of people with dementia. Presently, the program has been implemented in seven different locations and serves approximately 150 pairs of elders with dementia and volunteers annually.

After obtaining institutional review board (IRB) approval for data collection, we asked undergraduate college students who participated in OMA to write three to six journals across the semester. (One-third of the students who participated in the program and received one credit hour of independent study wrote six journals; the remaining students were volunteers who received no academic credit and completed only three journals.) Typed journal entries were submitted prior to the next week's OMA session. All students were required to write journal entries after their first OMA sessions; the prompt to which they responded was: "After the first social visit, please write your impressions about your first day of volunteering in a dementia unit. Write about how the interaction with the elder with dementia made you feel. Give examples and explain why it made you feel that way."

Similarly, after their last OMA visits, all students were required to write journal responses to the following prompt: "After the last visit, please write what you have learned from volunteering with OMA. What were the best parts? What were the most challenging parts? How can we improve the program? How can we better support you and other students like you in this kind of learning experience?"

Illustrative, additional prompts included:

> After the second or third visit, please describe your interaction with the elder that you assisted. Was there anything that you said or did that made him or her react or respond expressively (either positively or negatively)? Was there anything that she or he said or did that made you feel/react strongly (either positively or negatively)? Please describe these interactions with as much detail as you can.

and:

> After the eighth or ninth visit, please describe how you feel about your relationships with the elders now and compare it with how you felt after your first visit. Describe any changes in how you feel and try to analyze what may have caused these changes.

Three hundred journals written by 59 students in 2009–2010 were read and reread repeatedly and analyzed using NVivo 8 (QSR International, 2008). Using grounded theory and the constant-comparison method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), a set of codes emerged and was continually refined by two members of the research team until a set of categories was established. Consensus was reached between the two researchers whenever there was a disagreement in the coding process. Review of more recent students' journals written in 2011 and 2012 did not necessitate the development of new categories.

FINDINGS

Overall, students in OMA wrote of benefits similar to those reported in the literature on intergeneration programs that involve elders without dementia. Their attitudes toward elders with dementia became more positive. They felt more knowledgeable, more comfortable, and more confident in their interactions with elders who have dementia. They felt rewarded for providing people with dementia with positive experiences. They developed a sense of friendship and kinship with their partners. They became less fearful of their own aging. They reported enhanced academic learning and insights into careers in aging as a result of participating in the program. And they learned to cope with challenges brought about by unpredictable behavior on the part of some elders. But by far, the most commonly repeated theme was how much they enjoyed working with the elders who have dementia in doing these weekly art projects. Appendix A contains a complete list of the journal themes. In this manuscript, we focus on the category of rewards gained from service learning (category E themes), although we also present the issues and challenges faced by some of the students (catergory F themes).

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Enhanced Academic Learning and Insights Into Career Goals

Students were able to use their OMA intergenerational service learning experiences to better understand their course work on aging and the real career possibilities of the field. "You can learn only so much in a classroom. It's through hands on experience and first person interaction that you truly learn about something." "My gerontology class teaches me the information, but visiting [name of facility] makes it real." "The OMA program changed gerontology from an interesting minor into my passion and my second major at [this] university."

Enhanced Sense of Civic Responsibility

Students learned that they are empowered to make a difference in others' lives: "OMA has transformed my view of how we treat people with dementia and other cognitive disabilities—it has made me realize that we have the ability to empower people to create, in the most amazing ways." This realization made them feel rewarded for having contributed to their partners' well-being: "It is a wonderful opportunity to step out of my comfort zone. I will be making a difference in someone else's life." "OMA has given me the invaluable opportunity to help spark creativity in these elders and it's very gratifying. At the end of the day, I feel that I've given back to my community." "If we just slightly improved an hour of her day, it was completely worth it."

Improved Attitudes Toward and Skills in Interacting With Older Adults

Students' attitudes toward older adults, in general, became more positive as a result of participating in the intergenerational art program with people who have dementia. They appreciated the diversity within the elder population and their potential as human beings despite their dementing conditions: "The elderly are such a unique and interesting part of our society. Every single one of the people I have talked to has made me laugh." "They each have their own story to tell and are just waiting to be heard." "Through my experiences at OMA, I realized that everyone has potential no matter what their limitations or age. These characteristics are no barrier and at OMA, everyone is equal and can have fun!" They also gained insights into dementia and appreciation for the personhood of people with dementia: "I have learned that dementia is not the end of someone's life rather it is just a start of new experiences and challenges that people have to contend with." "I now understand that they are still people, and they should still be treated with respect and should not be depersonalized due to this disease." "Before OMA, I talked to them like children. Now, I know the most important thing

is to make them feel important and show that their life still means something to someone."

Along with these insights, students also felt that they became more competent in their abilities to interact with people who have dementia: "The experience of OMA allows me to see exactly how they act and react to the actions of others, which strengthen my understanding of how they think and feel." "In the past, I've talked to them in a high voice and repeated questions as if I were talking to a child. Now, I know to talk to them like adults and treat them like adults. Otherwise, you're just making them feel worse."

The students developed empathy and sensitivity toward the elders that enabled them to understand the elders' nonverbal cues: "She didn't actually say anything negative to me, but I could feel that she didn't like that I took over during the first phase, and although she didn't withdraw, I felt that she was discontent with the work." "Although I still do not know what everyone's background is, you can tell when certain things are bothering them." "[She] can barely converse with me, but we understood each other. . . . When she didn't like something she would shudder her shoulders and tilt her head to the left. And when there was something she liked she would simply smile." And when communication fails, they would like to know how it felt from the elder's standpoint: "I want to understand how [she] feels when she can't remember what she was trying to say."

Relationship Building

All students in this study experienced transformations from being fearful and anxious about their abilities to work with people with dementia to establishing relationships with them. Students clearly stated at the beginning of their participation that they were worried and sometimes even a little bit scared: "I became worried after the training session. I wasn't necessarily scared, but more worried that I would do something wrong." "My first impressions in the dementia unit were uncomfortable and even a little frightening." "I approached my first visit to [name of facility] with much anxiety." However, several weeks later, students articulated that they felt much more comfortable with their own abilities but also with the perceived relationships they established, as illustrated here:

> I almost consider her in the same light I might consider my own grandmother. There are differences, of course . . . but I care about her and have that same pull toward her, just to hold her hand, and to see if she needs anything. . . . I was hoping that something like the relationship I have with her might come from this, but I didn't think that it would happen so fast, and I wasn't sure that it would happen at all, so I am very grateful.

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> When I spend time with them, I don't feel like it's a volunteering experience. Now I feel as if I know them and have a relationship with them." Another student expressed surprise at the relationship she felt even though her partner was no longer verbal: "When I first started doing OMA though, I didn't think I would get close to any of the elders. But after 5 weeks of working with her I really had grown attached to her. It's amazing how you can develop a relationship with someone who really can't communicate [verbally] at all.

Students often used the term "friendship" when describing their relationships with their partners, "I really feel like I am forming friendships with and beginning to really understand the residents." "I later started working with [her] and have absolutely loved her and our friendship we have developed."

> Everyone that volunteers clearly wants to be there and no one treats it like a hassle or requirement. I think that is a big part of what makes OMA so successful. The residents are not a burden to these volunteers, and I think the fact that they are treated like friends and equals rather than burdens is a success in itself.

These relationships felt reciprocal to the students: "I know that each week they may not remember our names or working with us the previous week, but I am sure that somewhere deep down they really do know us." "Although these residents may not remember my name per se, I still feel I have a mutual relationship with them." "Although she does not seem to remember me week in and week out, she does seem more comfortable with me each week. There might be some vague familiarity with our relationship."

Self-Development

Having the opportunity to interact beyond their immediate social circles, students discovered aspects about themselves that they did not realize before participating in this intergenerational program: "I have also learned more about myself as a person in regards to how I feel toward others who are quite different from me and that I can accept them for who they are." "I will also remember that life is not over, so it is important to enjoy every moment we have. I am very grateful for this experience. I know I will be growing more in the next few weeks." "Since starting this program . . . I have become more patient and am overall in a better mood in general."

Students also developed new levels of self-confidence that are transferrable beyond the program itself: "I've learned how to better interact with the elderly that require special help. This interaction has enabled me to

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be more self-confident in unfamiliar, new situations." "After leaving [this facility] each week, I am eager to interact with elderly people. It gives me the experience and confidence to do." Some students even see their partners with dementia as role models for their own aging: "[She] is a good role model because she seems very happy with her life. I want the same in my own life when I grow older." And they learned important life lessons from their partners: "I am learning more to accept life as it is and enjoy it as much as I can." "They taught also taught me to enjoy every moment in life because one day I may be facing dementia as well." "What I enjoyed the most with her company was that she was content about everything. . . . [She] was teaching me about happiness, and she didn't even know how she has touched my life. She had taught me to be happy with life, especially since we only have one to live." "Dedicating time outside of academics to help someone else definitely lets me know the right perspective in my own life (things are much bigger than myself and sometimes I need to deny myself for someone else)."

Reflections on Own Aging

One aspect of students' self-development is their thoughts about their own aging. As a result of participating in the intergenerational program, students became more reflective and more positive when considering their own aging processes: "Before this program, I would passively think about aging, as in, it was just something that happened and that was it. Now, however, I have learned the various aspects of aging. Even as one gets older, they are still learning and creating. OMA has allowed me to see this first hand." "The particular individual I worked with for a complete year in the OMA program taught me that aging should not be a negative experience, it should be celebrated." "I think that OMA has changed some of my attitudes and beliefs of aging. It no longer seems as grim as I once thought."

Sheer Enjoyment

The most commonly repeated theme is the students' sheer enjoyment of interacting with their partners and facilitating their partners' creative expressions: "I look forward coming back each week. I feel that the residents feel the same way too, though they may not grasp the fact that we come back at the same time every week." "Each week I look forward to going to [this facility], not just because I learn something new every week, but also because I truly enjoy it." "Every week, I can't wait to work with [my partner] at [this facility]. Each Friday morning is such a learning experience and is a great way to end my long week of classes and start my weekend."

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Learning to Cope with Challenges

Although the students' journal entries were overwhelmingly positive, some journal entries dealt with challenges when working with people with dementia. The unpredictability of the elders' moods and behaviors from week to week could be an issue for some students: "My third visit I was with her again, but she was having a really bad day and seemed really confused and negative, which was difficult for me, since I had had such a wonderful time with her the previous week." Lamenting losses that came with the disease, one student wrote, "She seemed very distraught over her declining health, eyesight, etc., and was constantly bringing it up." Another student felt unprepared to deal with a partner who was upset: "Personally, I was unprepared when I saw [my partner] freaking out about the light shining in her eyes. Even when she was moved, she was still very agitated and frustrated with everyone and everything. Nothing anyone could say could calm her down."

Some students reported difficulty in deciding the balance between assisting their partners and providing them with opportunities to be independent and autonomous: "I didn't know whether to help her or just let her do it and ignore how it [the art work] ended up." These illustrative quotes show the types of challenges that some students experienced in their service learning experience.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purposes of this study were to (a) determine whether students in intergenerational programs with elders who have dementia gain benefits similar to those reported by students who participate in intergenerational programs that involve well elders, (b) document what students say they gain from engaging in intergenerational art-making with elders who have moderate to late stages of dementia, and (c) begin to explore how art-making contributes to the process of building bridges across age and cognitive barriers.

Much of the research on intergenerational programming relies on pre- and posttest comparisons of students' attitudes, most frequently using quantitative scales. The use of student journals as the data source in this research provided a richness that is not afforded by attitudinal scales and suggests the wide range of potential outcomes of intergenerational programming for college students and older adults with dementia. Lending support to this claim are the additional themes that emerged from students' journals that are beyond the scope of this study.

The findings from students' journals show that with adequate training and support, college students in intergenerational programs with elders who

have dementia can gain personal learning benefits and insights about aging as readily as students who work with elders without dementia. Despite a few challenges found in a minority of the journals, everyone in our sample enjoyed their experiences of facilitating the creative expressions of elders with dementia. Even though the elders in OMA were at the moderate to late stages of dementia, students reported that they learned a great deal from the experience.

OMA enhanced students' academic learning and gave them insights into how they felt about pursuing careers in aging. They felt rewarded for making differences in the lives of others, even if it was only for a brief moment. Their attitudes toward elders in general and elders with dementia in particular became more positive, and they developed both insights about and skills to interact with people with dementia in ways that promote dignity and autonomy. They were able to build genuine reciprocity with their elder partners through these relationships and learn more about themselves and about life.

It is evident from these students' journals that elders with dementia gained not only new roles as artists but also as teachers and friends to younger people in the OMA program. Perhaps we can infer that the elders' sense of personhood and self-respect were also enhanced. This bidirectional enhancement of personhood in a caring relationship is the "bridge" that was built across age and cognitive barriers and art was the means to get everyone involved in this building project. The students' perceptions, as shown in their journals, support the claim that elders with dementia, even at moderate and advanced stages, are capable of experiencing friendship (de Medeiros, Saunders, Doyle, Mosby, & Van Haitsma, 2011). Although the students' enhancement of personhood was evident in their journals, the enhancement of the elders' personhood could only be inferred. Further research is needed to analyze the impact of intergenerational art programs from the perspective of the elders. We also invite additional research that explores the physiological as well as the psychosocial benefits of participating in intergenerational art programming with people with dementia for members of all generations.

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APPENDIX 1 Journal Themes

Journal Category	Journal Subcategory
A. Description of PWD	A1. Positive descriptions: Friendly, happy, beautiful, autonomous, role model A2. Neutral descriptions of behaviors A3. Negative descriptions: Upset, infantlike
B. Motivation (reasons for participating in service learning)	B1. Giving back to society
C. Attitude changes toward PWD	C1. Attitudes before doing OMA: Condescension, nervousness, fear of interacting with PWD C2. Respect for PWD C3. Empathize with PWD C4. Patience when working with PWD C5. Increased confidence and competence when interacting with PWD
D. Knowledge and skills learned	D1. Interaction/communication skills with PWD D2. Knowledge about PWD D3. Knowledge about OMA methodology
E. Rewards gained from service learning	E1. Enhanced learning and career development E2. Feeling rewarded for providing PWD with positive experiences E3. Friendship/kinship that developed with one's partner who has dementia E4. Self-development including reflections on own aging E5. Good experience in general terms
F. Issues and challenges faced when working with PWD	F1. Autonomy-support dilemma: Uncertainty about when and how much to assist F2. Unpredictable behaviors of PWD F3. Difficulty engaging PWD F4. Self-critique regarding actions taken or not taken

PWD = persons with dementia; OMA = opening minds through art

[1]A version of this table appeared in Yamashita, Kinney, & Lokon (2011)

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