Linking Lives:
Improving Intergenerational Relations Through Service-Learning

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By

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ABSTRACT

By implementing a service-learning experience in an introductory gerontology course, this project explored intergenerational service-learning as a potential way to address current issues in intergenerational relationships, specifically by improving attitudes toward aging and older adults. It found positive outcomes for the younger and older adult participants. Students exhibited more positive or balanced views of aging and older adults, and felt that the experience contributed to their education. Residents in an assisted living community enjoyed the interactions with the students and expressed that the experience contributed to their lives. While the study had several limitations, it provided numerous significant suggestions for future service-learning initiatives. Intergenerational service-learning has a promising future as a contact intervention and as a pedagogical practice. Although further research is needed, it has been shown to contribute to students' learning and educational experience, positively impact their attitudes toward aging and older adults, and add to older adults' quality of life. As society prepares for the significant cultural and societal changes that the aging population will bring, it is essential that intergenerational relationships are encouraged, supported, and utilized in order to fulfill psychological, social, and cultural needs. Intergenerational service-learning can potentially improve intergenerational relations while resulting in other positive outcomes, such as promoting meaningful learning experiences and meeting community needs.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, American society has experienced significant changes and developments that have revolutionized aging as well as the meaning and experience of old age. Improvements in medicine, nutrition, and health care have led to a rapidly increasing life expectancy. The current average life expectancy is approximately 78 years old, compared to 47.3 years in 1900 (He, W., Sengupta, M., Velkoff, V.A., DeBarros, K.A., & U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In addition to longer life spans and a lower mortality rate, sociocultural factors have led to decreasing fertility rates, resulting in a proportionately greater number of older people. Furthermore, the baby boomers, the largest age group in history, are approaching old age, as approximately 78 million boomers are expected to turn 65 years old between 2011 and 2029 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Demographers have estimated that by 2030, one in five people, or 20% of the total population, will be 65 years or older (He, W. et al., 2005). As a result, America is currently on the threshold of becoming an aged society.

The projections of growth for the older population in the near future indicate that the United States will soon experience a radical demographic shift that will impact nearly every aspect of society, including work, retirement, housing, transportation, health care, technology, education, and intergenerational relationships (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007). This imminent and dramatic change, which is already underway, will result in numerous cultural and institutional changes.

There are many positive outcomes and potential benefits of societal aging, particularly concerning intergenerational relationships. In addition to living longer, older adults are also experiencing lower rates of disability, attaining more advanced levels of

education, and living with more financial stability and affluence than preceding generations (He, W. et al., 2005). As a result, older adults may be increasingly engaged with younger generations, as many adults in later life may act as caregivers, workers, mentors, and volunteers within their families and communities. Furthermore, older adults are in a unique position to contribute to others, as retiring may provide them with more time to fulfill needed roles in society and share their knowledge, skills, and talents. However, these promising aspects of an aging population are rarely considered.

Rather, the aging of America is typically presented as having adverse consequences for intergenerational relations. For instance, increasing life expectancy results in a higher risk for developing chronic and disabling physical and cognitive diseases in late life, creating a greater need for families and institutions to care for older adults. Additionally, the health care system is confronted with the challenge of providing a growing population of older adults with medical care and prescription drugs, and the rising costs of medical services and long term care have become a significant concern. Furthermore, the current social policies and services the expanding population of older adults receives, such as Social Security and Medicare, are currently facing a "crisis," and may no longer be sustainable due to the increasing ratio of older adults to younger adults. Although these concerns have some validity, focusing on the potential issues of an aging society reflects the belief that the aging population is a burden and social problem, rather than a demographic transition that requires adjustment but has potential benefits.

Moreover, the current attitudes toward population aging are indicative of a fundamental problem in society – negative attitudes toward aging and generational divides and inequalities. In recent years, an increasing sense of age consciousness in

society has contributed to the development of aversion, fear, and negative attitudes toward aging and members of other age groups. Since the 1800s, advances in industry, medicine, and technology and changes in social policy have caused age to become an important means of social categorization and organization (Whitton, 1999). Modernization has led to a decline in age status, which has been reinforced institutionally and politically (Cowgill, 1979).

For instance, the establishment of retirement has lessened and even eradicated the need for older workers and created a sense of dependency in old age, which conflicts with cultural values that emphasize the importance of work, productivity, and independence. Programs such as Social Security have also played a role in this issue, causing older adults to be viewed as encumbrances to younger generations. As Barrow (1992) noted, "Old age became a burden to those who lived it and a social problem to those who analyzed it" (p. 19).

Likewise, the institutionalization of education has had negative implications for older adults. With societal advancement, education became compulsory. As a result of mass education and increasing standards, children are often more educated than their parents, resulting to an inversion of status, a cult of youth, intellectual and moral segregation, and social segregation (Cowgill, 1979).

Another aspect of society that has significantly impacted attitudes toward aging is the cultural obsession with youth. According to Whitton (1999):

> The association between youth, new technology, and the future formed the foundation for…'the youth cult.' The advent of this obsession with youth...is attributed to a cultural belief...that young people embodied the qualities necessary to advance society into a new progressive era. (p. 21)

As a result, youth is now equated with beauty, health, functionality, and progress. Conversely, old age is associated with unattractiveness, incompetence, impairment, lack of productivity or purpose, and disengagement. Science and medicine also contributed to negative views of aging, as old age became biomedicalized and therefore synonymous with disease, disability, and degeneration.

Furthermore, attitudes toward members of other age groups are often unfavorable due to a lack of knowledge and differences in ideologies. Changes in the structure of society have led to decreasing contact between members of various generations. Additionally, rapid social change has created discrepancies between generations concerning values, which creates difficulties in communicating with and understanding members of different age groups (Barrow, 1992). Age discrepancies also lead to a fundamental difference in interests and priorities, creating another source of conflict.

As these fundamental attitudes in society toward aging and members of other age groups demonstrate, a great deal of antipathy exists within intergenerational relations. As age has increasingly gained importance as a relevant aspect of identity due to changes in society and cultural values and ideology, it has become stigmatized, and the recognition of differences and assigning of inaccurate and hostile stereotypes has emerged as a serious challenge in intergenerational relationships. However, when interaction is encouraged and supported, many negatives outcomes of intergenerational relations are potentially negated, allowing for positive outcomes to occur.

One of the most plausible and effective ways of encouraging intergenerational interaction, dispelling stereotypes, and closing generational divides is through contact interventions, or intergenerational programming. Intergenerational contact interventions

seek to create meaningful exchanges between younger and older generations that provide participants with increased awareness and knowledge about other members of other age groups. Although there are various types of contact interventions, one of most promising forms is intergenerational service-learning. Intergenerational service-learning combines the values and goals of intergenerational programming with the pedagogy of service-learning in order to promote learning and education in addition to increased familiarity and understanding. As a result, intergenerational service-learning can potentially improve intergenerational relations while resulting in other positive outcomes, such as promoting meaningful learning experiences and meeting community needs.

This project seeks to explore intergenerational service-learning as a possible way to address current issues in intergenerational relationships. Chapter One examines various conceptualizations of "generations" in order to determine a comprehensive meaning that is applicable to the study of intergenerational relations. Chapter Two explains the impact of cultural and societal structures on intergenerational relations, and describes the process of age classification, age stratification, and the formation of age norms, which lead to socially meaningful differences between generations. Chapter Three investigates the impact of differentiation between generations by further delving into attitudes toward aging and perceptions of other age groups, particularly by examining the potential negatives aspects and outcomes of intergenerational relationships, including age segregation, ageism, and generational conflict. Conversely, Chapter Four explores positive aspects and outcomes of intergenerational relations, including the possibility of increased familiarity and understanding between generations and the development of

meaningful relationships between people of different age groups, which may result in social support, reciprocity, transference, shared wisdom, and generativity.

After exploring intergenerational relationships and potential problems and benefits, Chapter Five investigates the possibility of promoting positive outcomes and improving intergenerational relations though intergenerational contact interventions, particularly service-learning. It defines service-learning, examines the various types and models, and attempts to identify and addresses current issues within the pedagogical practice. Chapter Five then extensively explores intergenerational service-learning by examining its history, goals, and impact, considering possible problems and suggesting solutions, and detailing the process of designing and executing a successful intergenerational service-learning experience. Finally, Chapter Six describes the methodology and explores the results of an intergenerational service-learning experience implemented in an introductory gerontology course. It then examines the implications and provides suggestions for future intergenerational service-learning.

CHAPTER ONE

Defining Generations in the Context of Intergenerational Relations

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"Generation" and "intergenerational" are terms often used by academics, the media, and the government, and thus determining their definitions is important. However, despite the frequent utilization of these words, their meanings are difficult to establish. Whereas intergenerational can broadly be defined as "being or occurring between different generations," a more definite meaning cannot be determined without first defining generations.

Issues in Defining Generations

Generation is used in a multitude of ways and in a variety of contexts, and thus a significant amount of ambiguity surrounds the term. As Harootyan and Bengston (1994) noted,

> The term generation is frequently employed in the discussion of conflicts and connections that have arisen between generations as the result of increased longevity, decreased fertility, and decreasing societal resources. But which generations? Indeed what it meant by the term generation? (p. 10)

In addition to multiple meanings, generation is often used with or in place of terms such as cohort and age group, creating even greater uncertainty. Edmunds and Turner (2002) described the many ways generation has been used, such as "a position within a continuum of kinship descent; as a synonym for a birth cohort such as the baby boomers; as a synonym for life stages such as 'the student generation' or to mark a historical period, that is a cultural generation (p. 16)." Each distinct meaning has specific connotations, usages, and implications.

The Meaning of Generation in Relation to Cohorts

At the societal level, generation is often defined in relation to cohorts. In the broadest sense, cohort refers to a group that shares a particular characteristic. When defining generation, this characteristic is often age, year of birth, or period of birth. This has created a number of sub-terms including birth cohort and age cohort, which are often used interchangeably. Harootyan and Bengston (1994) justified this relationship, claiming, "Individuals in a birth cohort experience the same unfolding historical events at the same point of their development into adulthood, and thus have many other characteristics in common as they age. Hence, we use the term age cohort for this group of persons" (p. 11).

However, age cohort is also criticized for being unclear. Glenn (2005) referred to it as an "unfortunate term" and argues that an essential aspect of the definition of cohort involves a shared event or events, but the key aspect of age cohort is age, which is "a condition, and a changing one, rather than an event" (p.2). He claimed that the term age cohort does not distinguish between birth cohort and age category, which are quite different terms, as made evident by the following example: "Persons born in 1960 are a birth cohort and their age will be different depending on when they are studied. Persons 30 years old are an age category, the membership of which changes each year as one 1-year birth cohort moves out and another moves in" (Glenn, 2005, p. 3). Still, despite this point of disputation, the concept of cohort is widely accepted and utilized.

Consequently, a variety of disciplines use the term cohort when defining generation. For instance, economists, policy makers, and media analysts typically use generation in reference to a cohort composed of individuals born in the same period, in

which period is typically defined as 10 years (Harootyan & Bengston, 1994).

Gerontologists, sociologists, demographers and historians also utilize the term cohort in

relation to generation. As Edmunds and Tuner (2002) noted,

> Generations in the sense of cohort…refers to groups of people born during
> a specific period and who are distinct from other groups of people born in
> a different period, encapsulated in the contrast between a 'before time
> period' and an 'after time period.' According to this understanding,
> cohorts may be established in two ways: first demographically and/or
> second by historical experiences that affect a group of people born at a
> particular time more directly than others. (p. 6)

Gerontologists and sociologists also find the term useful in determining differences

between birth cohorts. These distinctions are termed cohort effects, or "differences

between groups sharing major life events (such as birth, marriage, college entry) at

different points in historical time" (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007, p. 32). Such differences are

important in understanding aging as well as creating social policy that concerns the

unique features of specific cohorts (Edmunds and Turner, 2002). Thus, generation is

defined in relation to cohort by numerous disciplines and in a variety of contexts,

emphasizing the meaning of generations as groups with a common age and shared

experiences. Moreover, the conceptualization of cohort is useful in determining the

similarities and differences between various generations, which is important in

understanding intergenerational relations.

The Meaning of Generation in Relation to Age Groups

Like cohort, age group is a term that is used heavily in defining (and is often

synonymous with) generation. Age group is used in multiple ways. Often, it is utilized to

establish an age category, or a group of people with the same chronological age.

Additionally, it is used interchangeably with cohort, in reference to a group of people born in the same year or period of time.

In gerontology and sociology, age group is "a term often employed to differentiate the population into segments who share a common stage of life: for example, children/youth, adults, elders" (Harootyan & Benston, 1994, p. 12). Similar to cohort, age groups are often used to categorize people; however, rather than being based on shared events, age groups employ life stages to distinguish between generations. Stages such as adolescence, young adults, middle age, and later life are categorized according to roughly comparable circumstances, roles and transitions (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007, p. 10).

A related term is policy age groups, which are used in the development of social policy and age-targeted services and programs. Policy age groups are typically defined as children and teens under 20, adults aged 20-59, and elders aged 60 and above. "These reflect policy distinctions between age groups viewed largely as 'dependent' (i.e., least likely to be in the labor force) and those viewed as 'self-sufficient' (i.e., most likely to be in the labor force)" (Harootyan & Bengston, 1994, p. 12). Age groups, life stages, and policy age groups are often based on imprecise, socially defined measurements. Still, due to the multiple uses of the term, it is important to examine age groups in relation to the meaning of generation. Additionally, like cohort, the usage of age group in defining generation stresses the importance of conceptualizing generations as a collective unit of individuals with common characteristics.

The Meaning of Generation in the Familial Context

Since families are multi-generational, the meaning of generation as applied to kinship ties is significant. Family structures, processes, boundaries and arrangements

influence family members across the life span, and thus generations are important in understanding personal and familial connectedness and continuity (Hanks & Ponzetti, Jr., 2004). Concerning kinship, generation is typically defined in accordance with lineage. Lineage "refers to the descending rank of family members from great-grandparent to grandparent, parent to child, grandchild to great-grandchild" (Harootyan & Bengston, 1994). Morgan and Kunkel (2007) defined generations as "recognizable social linkages connecting individuals of various ages and cohorts into one of the smallest but most influential social institutions – the family" (p. 114-115). Generation, therefore, is used in accordance with the succession of individuals born within a family. Different generations are thus determined according to "biological time," or the birth of parents, then the birth of their offspring, and then the birth of their children's offspring, with chronological time and historical time acting as mediators but not as the defining factors.

This particular application of "generation" has been useful in examining a variety of phenomena concerning familial relationships. For instance, terms such as "intergenerational support," referring to care and assistance between generations; "intergenerational ambivalence," referring to the conflicting emotions between generations; and "sandwich generation," referring to middle generations caring for younger and older generations in conjunction, are often applied to kinship units to explain interactions and relationships between generations. In addition to exploring familial ties, applying generation to kinship units is also often used to investigate socialization and how values and political and cultural attitudes are generated within the family (Edmunds & Turner, 2002). Thus, the meaning of generation within the familial context is important to understanding intergenerational relations.

The Meaning of Generation in a Historical and Cultural Context

Generations are also often defined within a historical and cultural context. According to Edmunds and Turner (2002), "In a general sense, we may define a generation as an age cohort that comes to have social significance by virtue of constituting itself as cultural identity" (p. 7). Strauss and Howe (1991) also align with this definition, referring to a generation as a "cohort group…whose boundaries are fixed by peer personality" (p. 60).

This concept is strongly based in Mannheim's work on generations. Mannheim conceptualized generation as an age grouping as well as a state of mind. In other words, generations share common views, beliefs, and values that differ from other generations. Mannheim (1997) proposed that generational identity is based in "a specific range of potential experiences," and thus generations are predisposed to "a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience and a characteristic type of historically relevant action" (p. 36). Thus, collective identity and group consciousness is developed through common experiences and events within a shared social and political environment (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007, p. 12). Examining generations within the cultural and historical context emphasizes that chronological time or birth year is not the only factor that defines generations; rather, culture and history have a significant impact on the development of a generation's characteristics and behaviors.

Toward a Comprehensive Definition of Generation and Intergenerational

Thus far, the meaning of generation has been explored in relation to the overlapping terms cohort and age group as well as within familial and cultural contexts,

in an effort to generate a comprehensive definition of generation within the context of

intergenerational relations. However, scholars have contended that a comprehensive

definition is unachievable. For instance, Harootyan and Bengston (1994) argued, "There

are several logically distinct meanings to the term generation, and...there is no one

definition that will satisfy all scholars writing about age-based social interactions" (p.

12). They conclude, therefore, that the precise meaning of the term will change across the

focus of intergenerational linkages, such as family relationships and exchanges,

community and neighborhood involvement, and national or societal-level transfers

(Harootyan & Bengston, 1994).

Despite this conjecture, a comprehensive definition may be generated from

multiple disciplines and various contexts. Although the numerous uses of the term

generation are diverse, they also share common elements. For instance, within familial

and societal contexts, generations are biologically and socially determined. As Mannheim

discerned:

> Generation location is based on the existence of biological rhythm in
> human existence – the factors of life and death, a limited span of life, and
> ageing. Individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same
> year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the
> historical dimension of the social process….Were it not for the existence of
> social interaction between human beings – were there no definable social
> structure, no history based on a particular sort of continuity, the generation
> would not exist as a social location phenomenon; there would merely be
> birth, ageing, and death. (p. 35)

Thus, generations are defined according to biological processes and social relations

within the context of culture and history. Second, although they may be defined

according to birth, chronological time, or culture, generations are comprehensively

groups or collective units of individuals with shared events and experiences. Lastly,

generations do not exist in isolation, but rather, amongst other generations, with the familial and societal structure allowing for interactions with both older and younger individuals.

This phenomenon is the defining characteristic of intergenerational relations, as it creates either a point of diffusion or a point of dispute concerning ideology, philosophy, and values between generations. However, it has become increasingly clear that although intergenerational interaction is permitted by the social structure, it is not necessarily encouraged or supported. Consequently, intergenerational relations tend to have more negative outcomes as a result of cultural and societal forces.

CHAPTER TWO

The Impact of Culture and Social Structure on Intergenerational Relations

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Numerous aspects of culture and the societal structure contribute to the nature of intergenerational relationships. In particular, the classification of age results in age stratification and age norms, which indicate socially meaningful differences between individuals of different ages and generations. These differences, in conjunction with the fundamentally negative attitudes toward aging and other age groups, result in various negatives outcomes.

Age Classification and Age Stratification

The recognition of differences between generations or age groups is a result of age classification. Classification is used in all societies to categorize members, typically in terms of age and sex. Such classifications are then used to separate and dictate expectations for members of each category.

Although every culture uses classifications, Whitton (1999) posited that modernization played a significant role in the development of age as an identifying feature, claiming that since the 1800s, changes in the occupational structure, societal institutions, and social policy have caused an increasing sense of age consciousness in society that has contributed to the development of aversion, fear, and negative attitudes toward aging. As a result, age became an important means of social categorization and organization, leading to age stratification and age norms.

According to age stratification theory, the population is classified and divided according to age. Morgan and Kunkel (2007) stated,

> Age stratification theory posits that we divide the population into strata (or layers) which are ranked hierarchically…In age stratification, age is used to cluster groups of people together (into age strata or… cohorts) and to differentiate people on the basis of the age stratum to which they belong. (p. 319)

Thus, if individuals are identified as "children," "teenagers," "middle-aged," or "old people," they are grouped with others of a similar age and then assigned the characteristics of that particular group. Concerning the hierarchal nature of age stratification, Palmore (2005) noted,

> In our society, the middle-aged tend to have the most power and prestige and children have the least. The old and young adults tend to be in between, and whether the old or the young are higher than the other depends on which dimension is involved (p. 17).

The dimensions that determine the levels of power include factors such as income, education, political activity, and entertainment. The process of stratification relies on the assumption that people in the same age group have defining characteristics in common, as well as characteristics that differentiate them from other cohorts.

The Process of Age Stratification

The social process of age stratification may occur in a number of ways; however, in order to determine how people are classified by age, it is important to first identify the criteria used. Similar to generations, the defining of age for the purpose of age stratification is complex. Although generations are often present in the discussion of age groups, they are rarely referred to in terms of age stratification, although they clearly highlight differences. Often, people are categorized according to chronological age, or accumulated years of life. However, even though this method uses a precise measure, ages are typically grouped within a

range. For instance, teenagers are between 13 years old and 19 years old and the young-old are between 65 years old and 74 years old. However, there are most likely distinctions within these age groups, creating ambiguity in classification according to chronological age.

At other times, people are classified according to life stages, such as child, teenager, young adult, adult, and older adult. However, this method is also imprecise, as it requires a specific definition of each stage. Determining a precise meaning of a life stage is often difficult, particularly in a culture that lacks clear indicators of when individuals progress from one life stage to the next. For instance, it is hard to determine when someone is "an adult," since people may view adulthood in different ways, and without an explicit cultural signal, such as a ceremony or ritual, individuals may use less formal signs of transitioning into adulthood, such as graduating from high school or college, achieving financial independence, or starting a family. Consequently, life stages are also not a reliable form of classification. As a result, people are typically classified according to individual and societal definitions of age, old age, and life stages that are unclear and equivocal but still have powerful implications in determining how people behave and how they are treated.

Age Norms

Despite the ambiguity in age classification, chronological age and life stages are used to group people in order to identify disparities between age strata and dictate behavior. According to Palmore (1999), age norms are:

the expectations about the proper or normal behaviors, obligations, and

privileges for the age strata or life stages. For example, children are
expected to go to school, have the obligation to obey parents, and the
privilege of being supported by their parents. In contrast, elders are
expected to retire, have the obligation to take care of their health and
assets, and the privilege of being supported by Social Security benefits.
(p. 16)

Age norms are expressed in primarily two forms. Law and policy often determine age norms, through institutions such as mandatory education and mandatory retirement. However, age norms are also inherently understood by members of society, without formalized expression. For instance, age norms are often expressed in the roles one is expected to have throughout the stages of life. Many people believe that one should fulfill certain roles, such as marriage, childrearing, or retirement at specific times in the life course. As a result of such inherent age norms, people might feel the following behaviors are unusual or inappropriate: an 80 year old attending college, a 30 year old living with and being supported by his or her parents, or a 16 year old working a full time job. Although these are not an explicitly expressed rule or law, such age norms are often widely accepted and believed within society.

Age norms are necessary in the current societal structure. As Morgan and Kunkel (2007) posited:

There are three important components of age norms: (1) they prescribe
and proscribe behavior (i.e., tell us what to do and what not to do); (2)
they are shared by some social group (such as society, a work
organization, or a subculture); (3) they carry with them some element
of social control or sanction (there are consequences of failing to
behave according to the social expectations) (pp. 98-99).

Thus, age norms have an important function in society. The expectations people have concerning how individuals should behave and in which social roles they should undertake at a certain age provide a form of social order and organization.

However, age classification and age norms also potentially have consequences for individuals and society. Morgan and Kunkel (2007) claimed, "Age stratification theory goes beyond the recognition that societies divide their populations by age or into cohorts and examines how societies offer different rewards and opportunities to members of different age strata" (p. 319). Thus, age is similar to other forms of classification as an indicator of difference that potentially results in social inequality. Additionally, age norms can also become subverted to act as a source of discrimination in their most extreme form, depending "on whether the assumptions on which they are based are prejudicial or not; and whether the expectations are realistic and appropriate or not" (Palmore, 1999, p. 16). Thus, the use of age and generation as factors in categorization indicates that the differences between people of various ages or age groups are socially meaningful. The identification of differences, in conjunction with the fundamentally negative attitudes toward aging and societal fragmentation between age groups, potentially results in numerous negative outcomes in intergenerational relations.

CHAPTER THREE

Negative Aspects and Outcomes of Intergenerational Relationships

As a result of cultural attitudes and values and the societal structure, there are numerous challenges in intergenerational relations. Issues such as age segregation, stereotypes and ageism, and generational conflict are increasingly present in society, and act as a barrier to more constructive intergenerational relations.

Age Segregation

Age segregation, or the separation of different groups or cohorts based on age, is a widely debated issue. Disputation focuses on the question of if and how age stratification and norms lead to age segregation. Some scholars maintain that age segregation is becoming less prevalent and significant. For instance, Riley and Riley (1994) recognize that age stratification exists and acknowledge the current age segregation, but posit that the current age-differentiated society will give way to an age-integrated one. They claim this process is already occurring, and point to the rise of retirement communities in college towns as an example of this change.

However, many scholars claim that this type of progress does not negate the pervasiveness of age segregation. They argue that differentiation between age groups and generations has been used progressively more as a method of assigning certain characteristics or expectations, which results in a fixed life course (Kohli, 1986). The fixed life course is a consequence of age norms. Society assigns actions and roles to certain age groups: education is for the children, adolescents, and young adults, work is for adults, and leisure is for older adults. As people progress through life, they are

expected to follow these norms, and deviation is often questioned and met with disapproval. The fixed life course is often manifested in societal institutions such as education and retirement. For example, young adults primarily populate college campuses, whereas retirement communities are buildings or neighborhoods that primarily house people in later life. Thus, the current rigid or fixed organization of the life course stresses differences between age groups based on age and age norms, leading to age segregation. Additionally, various age groups view those in differing age groups as too dissimilar to have relationships (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2007), and as a result age segregation is supported and perpetuated.

Another institution that constructs and sustains age segregation is the mass media, particularly in the area of advertisements and marketing. Ward (1997) claimed,

> The baby boom bulge in the population helped to create not only a distinct youth culture in the 1960s but also an emphasis on marketing goods and services to particular age segments, whether it be toys to children on Saturday morning television, clothing to teens on MTV, or vitamins to adults over the age of 50 (p. 28).

As a result, younger and older adults are entirely segregated in popular culture. The media promotes distinct television shows, magazines, music, and consumer products for different age groups. This market segmentation creates further disconnect and segregation in society.

Ageism

Other potentially negative consequences of age classification, age stratification and age norms are stereotypes and ageism. The identification of differences and the subsequent consequences have a significant impact on individuals and society. Throughout history, factors such as race, gender, religion, socioeconomic class, and

sexual orientation have been used to classify others. Individuals are categorized and grouped according to such identifiers, and are thereby associated with the generalizations, myths, and stereotypes that society has assigned to each particular group. The marginalization of groups has been met with a great deal of opposition, which has dramatically altered society. For instance, the civil rights movement and the women's movement have had a significant impact, which is evident in a number of ways including the increasing presence of minorities in the workplace, in the government, and in positions of power. It is also manifested in the political and legal measures that attempt to prevent discrimination against people based on factors of identification. However, despite this progress, many forms of stereotyping and oppression continue to exist, particularly concerning age.

Although ageism is an important issue in society, little attention was given to the stereotyping and discrimination of people as a result of their age until recently. As Fredman and Spencer (2003) noted,

> Age discrimination is a relative newcomer to the equality arena. While discrimination on grounds of race or sex has been prohibited for nearly three decades, deep seated inequalities on grounds of age, whether in employment, health care, social services, or education, have been accepted as natural or appropriate (p. 1).

Ageism is often overlooked or ignored because it is one of the most accepted and innate forms of discrimination, particularly due to the widespread and typically unchallenged stereotypes concerning aging and older people.

Stereotypes about Aging and Ageism

Stereotypes are widely held and typically fixed beliefs or opinions about a particular group. Generalizations and stereotypes are not only useful, but necessary. They

allow people to form ideas about what others are like and how to most effectively and

appropriately interact with them. However, as Barrow (1992) noted:

> Stereotyping, whether direct or subtle, is usually inaccurate. When we generalize by putting people into categories, we tend to oversimplify reality. We ignore inconsistent information, and we emphasize only a few characteristics. Stereotyping does not consider individual variations...Although some stereotypes can be positive, most are negative; whether positive or negative, they are impressions and not based on objective information. (p. 27)

Stereotypes about aging are often based on beliefs that growing older is equated with a

complete loss of cognitive and physical functioning, such as the belief that older people

are incapable of learning or are sedentary. Other stereotypes are based in social

relationships, such as the generalizations that adults in later life are lonely or are

disengaged from their communities and society. Others involve personality, such as the

belief that older adults are cranky or grumpy, set in their ways, or narrow-minded. Other

stereotypes focus on functioning, such as the generalization that older people are ill or

disabled. Some stereotypes about older people are positive, such as the belief that older

people are wise.

Stereotypes about aging may invoke different responses. For instance, many

stereotypes may lead to a fear of aging, or the dismissal of older adults as important,

contributing members of society. At times, stereotypes about aging that depict older

people as helpless or lonely are considered compassionate stereotypes, meaning that they

are derived from feelings of pity or concern about the welfare of older adults and the

desire to help them. Stereotypes may also lead to intense emotions, including anger or

hatred (Barrow, 1992). Regardless of the individual response, a majority of stereotypes

about aging are inaccurate and antagonistic, and have significant consequences.

Ageism throughout the Life Course

Levy (2003) posits that negative stereotypes and ageism are internalized in individuals throughout the life course, originating in childhood as a result of the cultural environment. In a study conducted by Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper, and Serock (1977), drawings of a person in four different stages of life were shown to children in grades kindergarten through sixth. They found that students as young as three years old were able to recognize the oldest man and 67% of the subjects described him as "helpless, incapable of caring for himself, and generally passive" (p. 509). In addition to forming judgments about adults in later life at a young age, children also form ideas and beliefs about the aging process. When the subjects were asked how they would feel about becoming an older adult, 60% of the children responded in negative ways. Levy postulates that as individuals age, the process of internalized stereotypes continues and is consistently explicitly and implicitly reinforced through language and culture.

As people enter their later years, they are aware of the negative attitudes toward aging in society, and thus, the prejudice they have developed throughout the course of their life transform into self-stereotypes. This process strongly impacts older adults' self-concept and behavior.

The Effects of Ageism

Ageism negatively impacts older adults in a number of ways. Levy and colleagues (2003) have demonstrated that ageist behavior and aging self-stereotypes affect individuals' cognition, behavior, and will to live. Other scholars have

proposed that "stereotype threat" and "self-fulfilling prophecy" are frameworks for understanding the impact of ageism on older adults' behavior. According to such theories, older adults perceive negative attitudes that indicate they are no longer independent, worthwhile, and valued in society. After accepting these beliefs as true, older adults not only experience a loss in self-esteem, but also begin to believe and internalize such myths and stereotypes and act accordingly (Nelson, 2005). This process serves to preserve and support such stereotypes and the negative treatment of older adults, creating a cycle of ageism.

In addition to impacting individuals, ageism also has implications in the societal context. Ageism is widespread at the institutional level, pervading and impairing health care, long-term care, governmental policy, and the workforce. Additionally, ageism serves to support structures such as age segregation and generational conflict, preventing younger and older adults from interacting and exchanging on a regular basis outside the family.

Societal Sources of Ageism

Whereas age classification, age stratification, and age norms form the foundation for ageism, it is constructed and maintained in a variety of ways. One of the primary sources of ageism is the attitudes toward aging prevalent in society. American society holds many beliefs and ideals that support negative stereotypes and prejudice against older adults. Numerous studies have demonstrated that negative attitudes about aging are insidious and widespread in Western culture (Hess, 2006; Palmore, 1999). As Hess (2006) noted, "These attitudes are reflected in affective, cognitive, and behavior components of behavior and they are relatively

pervasive, both across individuals and across contexts" (p.389). Such attitudes are evident in a number of ways.

For instance, ageism is inherently expressed in society though language; in particular, the connotations and meanings of words. For instance, the definitions of aging and old age are ambiguous and vary greatly. Aging is most simply defined as the process of human development over the lifespan. However, the term aging is not used throughout the lifespan; rather, the "aging" population refers to older adults rather than to individuals of all ages. Synonyms for aging include "crumbling, declining, developing, fading, fermenting, getting on, maturing, mellowing, senescent, slumping, stale, waning, wasting away, and wearing out (*Roget's New Millennium Thesaurus*, 2007). Of these terms, thirteen out of fifteen have a negative connotation, demonstrating that aging is associated with unfavorable characteristics and events.

Additionally, many people disagree about the meaning and onset of old age. According to Palmore (1999), some people agree chronological age defines when a person becomes old, but disagree about what that age is. Typically, the chronological age of 65 years is used to define "old." This age is rooted in policy, as 65 is the age at which one becomes eligible for "old-age" benefits, such as Social Security and Medicare. Others believe that old age is characterized by factors such as retirement status, health, ability, or the process of dying.

The disputed definitions of aging and old age are based on the fact that few people identify with old age due to the negative connotation of the word "old." Old is equated with uselessness, unattractiveness, unattractiveness, and deterioration. Conversely, "young" is associated with health, energy, vitality, activity, and beauty.

These associations are expressed in common, everyday phrases. Many older adults maintain that they "still feel young," or are "young at heart," suggesting that they feel healthy, energetic, alive, and happy. Often, to "look old" means to appear unsightly or infirm and to "look young" means to look beautiful, handsome, and healthy. "You don't look your age" is a compliment meaning that one does not look as unattractive as other people in that age category. "You're as old as you feel" associates youth with health and well-being, and old age with illness and misery. Palmore (1999) noted, "Obviously, such connotations of 'old' and 'young' tend to create and reinforce ageism" (p. 48). Thus, language and word usage is one of the causes and perpetuators of ageism in society.

Another one of the primary sources of ageism is society's cultural values. For instance, a cultural value that promotes ageism is the equation of youth with beauty and health. In the media, in advertisements, and in stores, traits such as attractiveness, vitality, sexiness, and strength are represented through images and words emphasizing youth, such as the presence of only young models in the fashion industry, and the anti-aging cosmetic and plastic surgery enterprise.

American culture also prizes rationalism over traditionalism. Palmore (1999) noted, "Because elders are perceived as more traditional, past oriented, and conservative rather than rational, future orientated and favoring change, they appear to deviate from this value orientation" (p. 88). This results in elders being perceived as "old-fashioned," or "stuck in their ways," and thus incapable of contributing to progress.

Yet another cultural value that upholds ageism is individualism over collectivism. American society highly regards individuals who are independent and self-reliant. Within families, older adults may be perceived as a burden as they need increased care. At the

societal level, elders may be viewed as using resources without contributing. Each of these generalizations emphasizes that older adults are dependent and require others at the individual and societal level to live.

Additionally, ability is an important cultural value that undermines older adults. People attach a great deal of importance to mental competence and bodily ability. Older people are often stereotyped as having neither of these qualities, and old age is equated with a decline in cognitive and physical functioning.

Perhaps one of the most pervasive values in American society that supports ageism is a fear of the aging process, and in particular, dying and death. This apprehension toward the end of life is demonstrated in the emphasis on medical intervention and life-prolonging interventions. Nelson (2005) postulates that ageism is "prejudice against our feared future self" (p. 207), which is rooted in a fear of death. Since old age is associated with dying, the aging process is often equated with the dying process. Whereas the aging process involves development throughout the lifespan and incorporates both gains and losses, the dying process is typically accompanied by increasing deterioration, disability, and dependence. Thus, when the aging process is associated with the dying process, people view growing old as a prelude to death and assume that old age is therefore negative.

Yet another source of ageism is a general lack of knowledge about the aging process. As Fredman and Spencer (2003) argued, "Many processes are mistakenly associated with aging, and these need to be distinguished from true aging" (p. 2). In other words, many of the differences people perceive between younger people and older people

are not actually a result of aging, but of other factors such as selective survival, cultural changes over time and cultural lag, and differential challenge.

Selective survival refers to the fact that the population of older adults is comprised of individuals who have survived beyond other members of their cohort. Selective survival occurs for various reasons, including genetics, personality, environment, and lifestyle. Evans (2003) claimed, "Certain characteristics might be more frequent or pronounced in very old people not because they have come on with age, but because only people with such characteristics have survived to old age" (p. 12). Thus, as a result of selective survival, the older population cannot be appropriately compared to younger generations, as it consists of a minority group of people who have lived for an extended length of time.

Cultural changes over time in addition to cultural lag also contribute significantly to misconceptions of aging. Changes over time result in "cohort phenomena." Evans (2003) posited:

> Cohort phenomena are consequences of the different experience of people born at different times. They may reflect biological influences such as maternal health or infant nutrition; they may also reflect generational differences in education and lifestyle or traumatic experiences such s warfare or famine. Cohort phenomena can affect physical health and survival but have also been demonstrated in psychological functioning (p. 12).

Cohort phenomena can be manifest in a number of societal structures, such as education. For example, many people believe that cognitive functioning, including the ability to learn and retain information, deteriorates with age. However, in reality, a great deal of the discrepancy exists due to cultural factors. Older adults are not encouraged to attend school or seek education. Moreover, education and testing techniques are typically

molded to fit the faculties and culture of the younger generations and thus not as appropriate for older adults. Thus, the failure to take cohort differences into consideration often results in negative and unsubstantiated beliefs about aging.

In addition to cultural changes, cultural lag also contributes to current conceptions of aging. Cultural lag is defined as "A situation in which some parts of a culture (usually material culture) change at a faster rate than other parts (usually nonmaterial)" (Broom & Selznick, 1968, p. 638). Many of the fallacies about aging are based on a time when many people did not live to old age, and those who did were more likely to develop debilitating diseases, experience mental and physical decline, and die soon after turning 65 years old. However, over the past century, older adults now experience increased health, mental and physical functioning, financial security, social activity, and well-being (Palmore, 1999). Although the experience of aging has changed, the conception of aging has not as a result of cultural lag.

Differential challenge refers to differences in older and younger adults that are interpreted as a cause of aging, when in fact they are due to other mediating factors. Evans (2003) claimed,

> Differential challenge is a serious social problem. Aging as a loss of
> adaptability can only be fairly assessed if the same challenge is offered to
> individuals of different ages…all too often we present old people with
> more severe challenges than face the young and then attribute their poorer
> outcome to aging rather than the fact that we have loaded the dice against
> them. (p. 13)

One serious manifestation of differential challenge is health care. Older people are often provided with lower quality of care and limited options for treatment and self-management (Leventhal, Forster, & Leventhal, 2007), which contributes to the belief that

older adults are in poor health, when in fact, they are often not offered the same treatment as the rest of the population.

Another issue related to a lack of knowledge about the aging process as a source of ageism is that experience with older adults often does not necessarily alter or eliminate aging stereotypes. Often, ageism is present in counselors, educators, and health professionals who serve the elder population, despite the fact that they interact with adults in later life more frequently than others. Typically, members of "the helping professions" hold negative stereotypes and prejudice concerning older adults pertaining to their health and physical and cognitive capabilities, which is evident through behaviors such as "elderspeak," or baby talk directed toward older adults, overaccomodation, or helping more than necessary and causing further decline, ignoring serious physical and psychological symptoms on the assumption that they are an aspect of aging, and providing limited or inadequate information concerning illness, treatment, prevention, and self-management (Levy, 2003; Nelson, 2005; Leventhal, Forster, & Leventhal, 2007).

Additionally, the lack of knowledge about the age process and negative views toward aging are supported in academia, which often has a negative bias toward aging. The biomedicalization of ageism, or use of the medical model has reinforced ageism by "focusing on the less healthy, the frail, and the problems of aging persons" (Minichiello & Coulson, 2005, p. 4). Although research has demonstrated that aging has a combination of positive and negative outcomes, with negative outcomes being less frequent, gerontology and other disciplines studying aging have problematized aging by focusing almost entirely on the challenges of aging (Atchley, 1997, p.186). Concerning

social policy, elders are portrayed as being "in need of help," and are thus portrayed as burdens rather than contributors to society. Additionally, gerontology promotes the classification and generalization of older populations, using societal definitions and sub-groups to describe "old age," and assumes that younger adults and older adults are significantly different (Bytheway, 2005). Furthermore, as Golub and Langer (2007) noted, much of the work concerning adult development assumes that the primary task of aging is coping with loss and decline, without consideration to positive aspects of later life. Thus, though academia is certainly useful in understanding and addressing the challenges of aging, it often reinforces societal attitudes and stereotypes by presenting an imbalanced and primarily negative view of later life.

Generational and Intergenerational Conflict

Generational or intergenerational conflict is another potential consequence of age classification, age stratification, and age norms, as well as another way that ageism may be manifested in society. Palmore (1999) proposed, "Age conflict is an extreme form of ageism in which two or more age strata conflict with each other" (p. 16). Generational conflict is a widely discussed and disputed issue in society. It is generally defined in political and economic terms, as some analysts predict that there is a possibility for dispute over the distribution of political power and government resources between generations. However, other analysts argue that the prospect of intergenerational tensions or warfare is unlikely and unrealistic. Generational conflict occurs for primarily due to differences in age and interests, which are related in nature.

The exploration of intergenerational and intragenerational conflict is strongly based in Mannheim's extensive theories on generations. Although much of Mannheim's work focused on the positive potential of generations to impact society, he also recognized the problems within generations and between generations. Intragenerational conflict is relevant to the study of intergenerational conflict for several reasons. First, it is based on the concept of experiencing conflict as a result of difference. Second, generations are often defined so broadly that there still may be age related strife. For instance, the baby boomer generation spans 19 years, making it quite possible that the younger and older sects of the generation would have less of a collective set of characteristics. As a result, a dispute may be described as intragenerational when, due to age differences, it is actually more intergenerational in nature.

In regards to intragenerational conflict, Mannheim acknowledged that although shared birth year generates the potential for establishing a shared group identity, all the individuals within a generation will not necessarily develop a sense of group consciousness (Mannheim, 1997). He further postulated, "Within any generation there can exist a number of differentiated, antagonistic generation-units" (Mannheim, 1997, p.49). Mannheim claimed that generation units could develop their own collective identity within the larger context of the generation. "Together they constitute an 'actual' generation precisely because they are oriented toward each other, even though only in the sense of fighting one another" (Mannheim, 1997, p. 49). His theory of generation "units" was his recognition that although he defined generation as a potentially collective group, there are subdivisions and subgroups within age cohorts (Hardy, 1997).

This concept is important to the study of intergenerational conflicts for several reasons. For instance, generational units could oppose other units within the same cohort, creating intragenerational tension, similar to generations conflicting with other generations. Moreover, it emphasized that individuals will not necessarily identify within their generation, but may still experience conflict based on differences in ideologies, values, and interests.

Concerning intergenerational conflict, Mannheim (1997) claimed that conflict resulted from differences between generations' common views and belief structures. He postulated that the resistance to change older generations exhibit creates opposition from younger generations. He stated,

> Any two generations following one another will always fight different opponents…While the older people may still be combating something in themselves or in the external world in such a fashion that all their feelings and efforts and even their concepts and categories of thought are determined by that adversary, for the younger people this adversary may simply be nonexistent. (Mannheim, 1952, pp. 298-299)

For instance, the defining events and themes of the baby boomers, such as the Vietnam War and the civil rights and women's movements, are not the defining experiences for younger generations. This difference creates misunderstandings and discord. Mannheim believed that this conflict was minimized, however, by the tendency of each generation to interact primarily with the generations directly before and after it, with relatively little interaction with distant generations. Mannheim also proposed that this structure of relations between generations is also positive, as "the adjacent generations serve as mediators and interpreters of the much older or much younger generations" (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007, p. 12). Mannheim's theories have provided a framework for examining and analyzing the current state of generational conflict. An extensive amount of

discussion and debated has occurred since Mannheim first published his theories in 1927, especially concerning intergenerational conflict.

Intergenerational conflict may occur for a number of reasons, but fundamentally, as Morgan and Kunkel (2007) postulated,

> The issue boils down to whether the fundamental goals and interests of young and old are sufficiently different as to make them adversaries in the political arena. Under a scenario of age-based political conflict, groups would solidify for political action based on age identification (p. 317).

For example, younger generations might advocate for increased funding to provide for the pursuit of higher education, whereas older generations may push for increased funding for programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Thus, the potential for generational tensions and strife is primarily based on the level of age identification, or the tendency to identify with an age group, and self-interested views and values. Even when people do not identify as members of a generation, they may still experience generational conflict with other age groups due to differences in age, which contribute to an individuals' concerns and needs.

The issue of intergenerational conflict gained increasing attention in the late 1960s, due to the development of the counter-culture and the level of political activism concerning human rights and the Vietnam War. These events created a great deal of tension and mistrust between generations, which is often referred to as the generation gap. Since then, the debate over intergenerational conflict is still political in nature, although it focuses primarily on economic issues rather than civil rights.

Currently, the most frequently discussed aspect of generational conflict is the generational equity debate. The United States collects resources from individuals who are economically productive and transfers them to dependent children, adults with

disabilities, and older adults. Concerning elders, taxes are deducted from wages to support Social Security and Medicare. In the late 1970s, it was recognized that the costs of benefits for older adults was growing. Hudson (1978) called this process the "graying of the federal budget," referring to the increasing percentage of the federal budget that was distributed to programs for older adults such as Medicare and Social Security (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007). As the number of older adults has increased, politicians, economists, and sociologists have increasingly paid attention to the allocation of resources. As the baby boomers approach old age, many analysts have questioned whether our economy can support the growing number of elders.

Many arguments exist in favor of decreasing old-age entitlements. For instance, some analysts claim that there is less poverty among older adults, and the incidence of child poverty is increasing. They argue that too much money is spent on supporting older adults, and assert that money should be given to future cohorts rather than the oldest generations. However, Holstein (1995) counters that reducing entitlements for older people will not necessarily result in increased funding for children. Additionally, child poverty has not increased due to the amount of money allocated to older adults, but rather due to issues such as increasing single parenthood and changes in the labor market.

In addition to arguing for reallocation of resources, a number of groups have campaigned for other forms of political action, including "movement away from age entitlements to entitlement programs based on need by eliminating cost-of-living increases, raising the retirement age for Social Security, and using tax policies to encourage private old-age insurance" (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007, p. 322). However, many scholars argue that the support for such movements is strongly based on rhetoric present

in the media and used by extremist politicians who promote the concept of "greedy geezers." Ward notes, "Fringe political movements have emphasized conflict between generations rather than mutual benefit and cooperation" (1997, p. 29), and as Morgan and Kunkel (2007) recognize, supporters of generational conflict have used mass media to portray older adults as having the potential for acting as a major voting block and expending the majority of government resources.

Despite the success of the political extremist groups and the media at promoting the possibility for generational conflict, there is little to no supporting evidence that it is prevalent in society (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007). Additionally, supporters of generational conflict do not take into consideration the importance of reciprocity. Reciprocity is often discussed in the familial context, but it also exists within a larger context. Society provides for children, expecting that they will mature into adults and contribute to society, just as it provides for older adults in recognition of their prior contributions, and a leveling of resources occurs (Cornman & Kingson, 1996). Nevertheless, generational conflict remains a serious concern for many people.

Negative Aspects and Outcomes of Intergenerational Relationships

As a result of age classification, age stratification, and age norms, there are numerous challenges in intergenerational relations. Issues such as age segregation, ageism, and generational conflict are increasingly present in society, and act as a barrier to more constructive intergenerational relations. However, there are also positive aspects of intergenerational relations, which can subdue or even negate adverse outcomes if encouraged and supported.

CHAPTER FOUR

Positive Potential Outcomes of Intergenerational Relationships

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In order to address the issues that may arise from negative intergenerational relations, interaction must be promoted and sustained. If differences between generations are respected and celebrated and contact is encouraged, there is the potential for increased familiarity and understanding and the development of meaningful relationships between people of different age groups. Such positive relations may result in social support, reciprocity, transference, shared wisdom, and generativity.

Intergenerational Relations

Social relations are important and necessary throughout the life course. Defined as "the broad array of factors and interpersonal interactions that characterize social exchanges among people" (Antonucci, 2001, p. 428), social relations significantly influence individuals' development, health, and well-being. Intergenerational relationships occur within a variety of contexts, but most commonly within the family through interactions between children, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. At the community and societal levels, meaningful intergenerational relations may develop in various forms, including service, education, and work based relationships, companionship, and friendship.

Education, Work, and Service Based Relationships

Intergenerational relationships transpire in numerous settings and conditions, through education, employment, and community service. In each context, intergenerational relationships may demonstrate differences in roles and equality. When

generations work with, teach, or assist one another, it is often in relationships with status

differentials, such as employer-employee, teacher-student, and mentor-mentee relations.

The educational structure is inherently intergenerational. Williams and Nussbaum

noted:

> When we think about the formal education of our society, we think about adults teaching children. This intergenerational contract has served society very well for more than 300 years. It would not be an overstatement to suggest that, beyond the context of family, the context of education has produced the most valuable intergenerational contact and the most productive intergenerational communication. (p. 211).

Traditionally, adults teach children to prepare them for further education and the

workforce. However, with the advent of adult education, it is also possible for younger

people to teach older people new skills or further their knowledge. Work is also a typical

setting for intergenerational interaction, as a people of diverse ages are typically

employed in most work settings. Additionally, older and more experienced employers

often supervise or manage younger employees, providing instruction or direction, relating

and developing expertise, and preparing younger workers to fill higher positions.

Likewise, younger workers may help instruct older workers adapt to the latest

technological advances.

In addition to relationships related to teaching or supervising, mentoring is

frequently used to describe intergenerational relations. Freedman (1993) defined a mentor

as "an older, more experienced person who seeks to further the development of character

and competence in a younger person" (p. 31). Thus, in intergenerational mentoring, older

adults may fulfill roles based on advice, counsel, encouragement and guidance, and

younger adults may seek such forms of support from older people.

In the context of volunteering or community service, roles are more diverse. Relations may involve older people serving younger people, younger people serving older people, or older people and younger people serving together (McCrea & Smith, 1997). Older people may serve younger people as mentors, tutors, coaches, or caregivers. A unique aspect of service-based interactions is that more opportunities exist for younger people to serve older people than in employment or educational settings, though these relationships are still perceived as more equal than teacher-student, employer-employee, and mentor-mentee relations. Younger people may visit, provide companionships or assistance, and even act as caregivers for older adults, particularly for those with health problems or physical and cognitive disabilities. Another distinctive characteristic of service-based relationships is that older and younger people may serve others together, often completely eradicating status differentials. These relationships may form out of interaction through activities such as civic beautification, community planning, spending time with or aiding vulnerable populations, or advocacy (McCrea & Smith, 1997). Thus, intergenerational interaction through volunteering or service can result in the development of numerous types of intergenerational relationships.

Intergenerational relationships established in work, school, or community service settings are typically mutually beneficial, though positional inequalities may and often do exist, potentially resulting in one party profiting more than the other. Additionally, it is important to note that intergenerational interaction in such environments may not always be positive or advantageous, particularly when status differentials result in unequal or exploitative relations. However, despite these possible negative outcomes, intergenerational relationships within the contexts of employment, education, or service

often result in development, learning, and support. Moreover, relationships initiated in such settings have the potential to develop into other forms of meaningful relations, such as companionship and friendship.

Friendship

Friendships are significant relationships that most individuals are involved in throughout their lives. In many ways, friendships are as important as familial relations, but far more difficult to define. Nussbaum, Pecchioni, Robinson, and Thompson (2000) noted:

> American society defines the family very clearly. Family members are those individuals who have the same 'blood' or who are linked by marriage…the term friend is only applied to people who have a personal relationship that is qualitatively of a particular sort. It is the active relationship itself that is the most important factor in deciding whether someone can or cannot be labeled a friend. (p. 215)

Thus, friendship is a term applied to relationships of a specific quality and significance. Friendship is also hard to classify because family members can be, and often are, friends (Nussbaum et al., 2000). However, several features of friendships have been identified that aid in determining a definition and distinguish friendship from other relationships.

First, friendship is viewed as a relationship between individuals as individuals, rather than members of groups or collectives. As Rawlins (2004) noted, "Friendship is a personal bond that is privately negotiated between particular individuals. People typically choose others as friends because of their unique personal qualities, not as representatives of a certain group or class of people" (p. 275).

Second, friendships are non-obligatory, and therefore are achieved, not ascribed. Therefore, although friendship may overlap with relationships involving family,

neighbors, or co-workers, friendships cannot be forced or compelled (Rawlins, 2004). Individuals are able to choose their friends and exercise control over such relationships. Additionally, due to the fact that friendships are voluntary, it is assumed that the relationship is mututally satisfying and enjoyable.

Third, friendships are nonexploitive in nature. Therefore, there is no ulterior motive, and although friends may help one another, friendships are not formed for the sole purpose of receiving aid (Nassbaum et al., 2000). It is also noteworthy that reciprocity and symmetry are essential to the nonexploitative nature of friendships. "If one individual seeks aid, it is inevitable that the individual receiving aid will want to reciprocate and help his or her friend in return when the opportunity arises. Through reciprocity, the symmetry of the relationship is maintained" (Nassbaum et al., 2000, p. 216). Rawlins (2004) identified equality as another key feature of nonexploitative friendships. He claimed:

> Although individuals of differing status, ability, attractiveness, or age may become friends, some aspect of the relationship functions as a leveler. Friends tend to emphasize the personal attributes and styles of interaction that make them appear more or less equal to each other. By stressing equality, they minimize the risk of exploitation or indebtedness in the in the relationship. (p. 275)

Thus, friendships involve mutuality, reciprocity, and equality.

Friendships also entail attachment, which results "from at least two individuals' collaborating in cultivating a shared social reality and history" (Rawlins, 2004, p. 275). The precise character and viability of specific friendships depends on whether the friends share the same stance toward their bonds. In addition to attachment, friendships involve affection (Rawlins, 2004). Thus, positive emotions and feelings such as caring, concern, and fondness are present between friends.

Types of Friendship

Two types or styles of friendship practices generally emerge. These characterizations have been described using a variety of terminology, including communal and agentic friendships, primary and secondary friendships, friendships of commitment and convenience, and confidants and companions.

Confidants, or close friends, and companions, or casual friends, differ in several ways. Rawlins (2004) defined confidants as relations that "approximate the ideals of close friendship in fulfilling individuals' needs for intimate communication, caring, subjective validation, and rather exclusive personal involvement with particular others" (p. 277). Friendships that reflect the confidant style exhibit qualities such as extensive talking and sharing, showing affection, spending time together, and serving one another. Confidants are typically described as close friends, and the relationships are based in deep emotional connections, commitment, equality, and mutuality.

Companions, however, "reflect persons' needs for sociable interaction, group harmony, objective validation, and inclusive social involvement with a variety of others" (Rawlins, 2004, p. 227). Friendships that exhibit the qualities of companionship fulfill the need to interact with others. Therefore, companions serve each other socially more than emotionally. Although spending time together is an important aspect of confidants and companions' friendships, companions' relationships are based primarily on pleasurable company and shared activities centered on leisure and enjoyment (Rook, 1987; Rook,1995). Companions may be classified as casual friends, and even though the relationships reflect philosophies of reciprocity, they are only maintained as long as circumstances allow and the benefits of the friendship balance or exceed the drawbacks.

Due to the fact that close friendships and casual friendships are different in nature and serve diverse functions, it is not clear which style is the most beneficial. Rather, it depends on individuals' needs, personalities, and participation in relationships (Rawlins, 2004). Additionally, it is important for people to have friendships that reflect the qualities of confidants and companions, as both fulfill various socioemotional needs and contribute to well-being (Rook, 1987; Pecchioni et al., 2005). Thus, close and casual friends play essential roles in people's lives.

Friendships Throughout the Life Span

Friendship is important for many reasons throughout the span. In childhood and adolescence, friendship serves a developmental function, particularly for social and emotional growth (Lieshout and Doise, 1998). Friendship is important in learning socially competent behaviors, and youth with friends are more adjusted and less emotionally troubled than youth without friends. Additionally, friendship helps youth prepare for adult relationships and romantic relationships. Friendships also teach young people how to deal with moral dilemmas and solve interpersonal conflicts. Van Lieshout and Doise (1998) observed that friendships:

> Provide contexts for cognitive development and the exploration of moral regulations and norms. The higher motivation for conflict resolution among friends can elicit higher levels of empathy and role taking; that is, the tendency to take the perspective of other in conflicts may be enhanced through friendships. (p. 296).

Friendship is also an important source of social support for younger people, and is thought to act as a buffer against stress. When faced with stress related to parental divorce, abuse, rejection, or bullying, youth may turn to friends for solace and security. Friends are also helpful when youth must adjust to new environments, such as starting

school or transferring schools (Van Lieshout & Doise, 1998). Thus, friendships in childhood and adolescence are important aspects of social, cognitive, and emotional development.

In young and middle adulthood, friendships depend on individual situations. Typically, the number of friends, the amount of contact with friends, and the intimacy level with friendships decrease in young adulthood, due to a variety of factors (Pecchioni et al., 2005). School, work, marriage, and parenting are obligations that often interfere with friendship, either due to time constraints, distance, or shifts in priorities. Pecchioni et al. (2005) postulated that one of the primary reasons for a decrease in friendships and intimacy was marriage ideals, which suggest that one's spouse or partner should fill the role of best friend. Additionally, people tend to focus their time on parenting and career development, decreasing their ability to emotionally invest in other relationships.

However, despite this seemingly negative change, friendships still play an important role in young and middle adulthood. Many people maintain relationships with close friends despite time or distance barriers. Friendships also serve other functions, which differ for men and women, as gender differences have been found concerning the focus of their friendships. Men's friendships tend to be based on work or recreational activities, and focus less on feelings. Women, on the other hand, typically center their friendships on emotion and related concerns (Pecchioni et al., 2005). Regardless of this difference, men and women both rely on friendship as a source of social support. Similar to childhood and adolescence, friendships in young and middle adulthood serve to alleviate stress. Friends may help reduce stress by listening, giving advice, helping process emotions, and providing distraction from the stressor (Pecchioni, Wright, &

Nussbaum, 2005). Therefore, despite the many changes that take place in young and middle adulthood, friendships continue to provide people with social support.

In later life, friendships are often essential in order for people to cope with and adapt to various stressors and challenges related to aging. Nussbaum, Hummer, Williams & Harwood posited that older adults' friendships serve the following functions:

> helping older people maintain contact with larger society, providing a
> buffer against loneliness and depression, providing a secure context in
> which declining health can be managed, and providing emotional support
> during times when it is unavailable from family members" (as cited in
> Pecchioni et al., 2005, p. 114).

Furthermore, friendship contributes significantly to psychosocial well-being. In fact, the positive relationship between friendship and well-being is stronger than the relationship between well-being and other important factors in late life, such as family activity. Nussbaum, Pecchioni, Robinson, & Thompson (2000) postulated that this effect is a result of friendships' voluntary nature and characteristics such as equality and shared attributes and experiences.

Although many characteristics of friendship remain stable throughout the life course, friendships in later life are distinct from earlier stages of life in several ways. Many of these features are a result of older adults' position within the life course and location in the age structure of society. Due to the physical and psychological factors related to the aging process, living into old age has both positive and negative outcomes concerning friendship.

Older Adults' Position in the Life Course and Positive and Negative Outcomes

One of the many unique and positive aspects of friendships in old age is that adults in later life often have long-term or even lifelong friends, with whom they have a

strong and special bond. Another positive factor that distinguishes friendships in later life from earlier relationships is the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of older adults' friendships. Nussbaum et al. (2000) claimed:

> Older adults report many more levels of closeness in their friendships than do younger adults. Younger adults make clearer distinctions between best friends and all other friends, while older adults differentiate between best friends with several levels of closeness. In this relational stratification, then, older individuals place adult friendships along a continuum of intimacy, with several different levels of best friends. (p. 218).

Older adults distinguish between various friends, with lifelong friends, work and leisure friends, and friends met later in life through a senior center or retirement home all on different levels of intimacy. However, as Pecchioni et al. (2005) noted, "Each of these different sets of friends was perceived to be close and to be an important part of a rich and full life" (p. 114). Therefore, friendships in later life, though classified and stratified among a continuum of closeness, all play an important role.

Friendships in later life are also distinctive due to the existence of extended populated biographies. Populated biographies refers to individuals' relationships throughout their lives (Matthews, 1986). This lifetime of experiences and an extended social history impacts friendships in later life. Nussbaum et al. (1998) stated:

> It is important to note that the past relationships of an individual affect the present relationships of the individual. The past relationships can make meeting new people easy if there is some common historical connection between the individual and the new acquaintances. (p. 219)

Thus, generational identity and shared or common experiences may serve to help initiate or strengthen friendships in later life.

Another favorable aspect of friendship in later life is the impact mortality can have on individuals' outlook and behavior. Socioemotional selectivity theory proposes

that individuals view and behave differently toward social relationships depending on

age-associated changes in future time perspective. Carstensen, Mikels, and Mather (2006)

postulated:

> When time is perceived as open ended, as it typically is in youth, people are strongly motivated to purse information. They attempt to expand their horizons, gain knowledge, and pursue relationships. Information is gathered relentlessly. In the face of a long and nebulous future, even information that is not immediately relevant may become so somewhere down the line. In contrast, when time is perceived as constrained, as it typically is in later life, people are motivated to purse emotional satisfaction. They invest in sure things, deepen existing relationships, and savor life. Under these conditions, people are less interested in banking information and instead invest resources in the regulation of emotion. (p. 347)

Thus, people in later life pursue and maintain emotionally fulfilling and satisfying

relationships, and instead of focusing on quantity, older adults may center on the

quality of friendships.

However, despite many positive characteristics of friendship in old age, older

adults may also experience negative outcomes related to aging. Relationships in later life

must take into account the reality of disease, disability, and death, as the risks increase in

late adulthood (Matthews, 1986). Disease and disability may alter or even end friendships

in later life as a result of physical and mental changes (Matthews, 1986). For instance,

physical limitations may make it difficult for people to travel and therefore maintain

friendships over long distances. Likewise, the development of hearing or speech

disabilities may prevent friends from communicating effectively, thereby substantially

altering the relationship. Cognitive disabilities, such as dementia, also hinder people in

connecting and maintaining friendships.

Although it is possible to adjust to such changes, it is often difficult because the friendship is often drastically different from the relationship that was established before the development of disease or disability. Another issue is that the friendship often becomes unequal in the sense that one friend must rely on the other with fewer opportunities to reciprocate (Rassmussen, 1998). Whereas friends are recognized as one of the greatest sources of social support and it is rewarding for some people to care for friends, others may view it as a burden or feel uncomfortable depending on friends for help.

Another matter related to aging and mortality is an increased chance of experiencing the death of a friend, and possibly outliving numerous friends. An alternative viewpoint to socioemotional selectivity theory is the possibility that some older adults may recognize the inevitability of their friends' deaths and respond by distancing themselves from formerly close relationships. This type of disengaging behavior potentially helps people begin to cope with the death of their friends before it actually occurs (Rassmussen, 1998).

Regardless of how older adults respond to the death of a friend, it remains a stressful and traumatic event that is more common in later life. However, some older adults are better able to cope and prepare for such loss, as well as maintain their social networks. Therefore, depending on individuals' situations, personalities, relationships, and emotional health, living into old age may have positive and/or negative outcomes concerning friendships.

Older Adults' Location in the Age Structure and Positive and Negative Outcomes

Similar to individuals' position in the life course, older adults' location in the age structure of society also may potentially have negative or positive consequences. Due to their cohort's location at the top of the age hierarchy, most of the people available to older adults are from younger generations. Additionally, due to rates of death, the cohort comprised of older people is decreasing more rapidly than younger cohorts (Matthews, 1986). As a result, older adults must interact more with people from different age groups than the rest of the population in order to obtain social support and maintain strong networks (Nussbaum et al., 2000).

Relying on people from other generations for friendship may be problematic in numerous ways. For instance, forming relationships with younger people may be difficult due to a lack of homophily and prevent older adults from having as many peer friendships with people of a similar age, which are important components of social networks. Nussbaum et al. (2000) claimed:

> Two individuals are homophilous if they are the same age, have the same status, have the same ideas and habits, and live near one another. Friends tend to be homophilous and therefore have much in common. With the exception of one's spouse, who is both a family member and a friend, most of an individual's family members are not the same age, often do not share similar ideas and beliefs, and can live quite far away. The homophily shared by friends is rewarding and enhances the well-being of individuals. (p. 222)

Furthermore, not only are friendships with people of similar ages satisfying, but people do not typically seek or invest in age discrepant friendships, as a result of the widespread assumption that people are usually friends with peers of a similar age. Holladay and Kerns (1999) noted:

> An assumption is that...friendships develop among people who are relative age peers, presumably because age peers share more in common and can provide valued exchanges within the relationship...Age similarity may be perceived as a necessary criterion for the relationship to be described as a friendship. (p. 101).

Additionally, intergenerational friendships are not encouraged. As a result of forces and structures in society such as age stratification and age segregation, people have fewer opportunities to develop friendships with people from younger or older cohorts (Bettini & Norton, 1991). Moreover, due to age norms, friendships that diverge from the "age peer criterion" are often regarded as unnatural or abnormal, and therefore receive disapproval (Holladay & Kerns, 1999). Furthermore, intergenerational friendships are often viewed as less rewarding or beneficial. Many people assume that due to dissimilarities and differences in status, intergenerational friendships cannot be as close or as meaningful as age peer friendships.

The tendency to favor age peer friendships exists in academia as well as society, which serves to perpetuate the belief that age discrepant friendships are not as important. Holladay and Kerns (1999) noted that scholars and research are often biased toward peer age friendships, which is apparent in several ways. First, a majority of research involves age peer friendships, and as a result much less is known about age discrepant friendships. Second, scholars such as McAdams, Healy, and Krause (1984) claimed that relationships between people who were significantly different ages could not be considered "friends" because they were not relative equals. Likewise, Reisman (1984) postulated that there are several types of friendship, with bias toward friends of comparable ages. He described reciprocal friends as close, similar, relative equals in age, and attached, with strong emotional bonds. Associative friends are based on factors of convenience, such as

proximity and lack commitment or emotional intimacy. Age discrepant friendships, however, are specifically designated as relationships between people who differ in age and status, such as student and teacher. In addition to displaying bias toward the assumption that friends should be similar in age, Holladay and Kerns (1999) suggested that these scholars implied that intergenerational friendships were not as emotionally close or meaningful as peer age friendships.

Thus, friendships with age peers are typically perceived as more normal, more acceptable and overall superior to friendships with people of different ages. As a result, there is limited attention or consideration regarding relationships between people of different ages, although it is widely recognized that friendship is present throughout the lifespan and important to people of all ages. However, despite these challenges, intergenerational friendships are important and should be encouraged and viewed as a valuable resource.

Intergenerational Friendships

Although intergenerational relationships are not frequently recognized or validated, many people participate in interactions and exchanges with people of different age groups. As Williams and Nussbaum (2001) noted, "It is becoming increasingly clear that intergenerational friendships do form and may provide the relationship partners with valuable, life-affirming interactions" (p. 217). Examinations of intergenerational friendships reveal that they are similar to peer age friendships given that they are voluntary, require mutual involvement, and exhibit roles negotiated by involved individuals. However, they often differ in equality, specifically concerning the place and

function of each participant in the relationship. However, such differences do not necessarily translate into less meaningful or emotionally intimate relationships.

In an examination of intergenerational friendships, Bettini and Norton (1997) studied the relationships of older people with an average age of 84 and younger people with an average age of 20 and discovered that 85% of the older adults and 33% of the younger adults reported that they were involved in intergenerational friendships. The older participants reported that their friendships with people from younger generations had less depth and equality than their friendships with similarly aged people, but viewed them as a greater source of instrumental support. They also indicated differences in roles, noting that they acted as advisors or counselors to younger friends. The younger participants, however, identified no significant differences between their age peer and age discrepant friends, and indicated similarities in principal activities, including talking, seeking guidance, and socializing.

Holladay and Kerns (1997) further examined intergenerational friendships by interviewing adults of various ages, specifically examining factors such as how they met intergenerational friends, what they talked about, what kinds of activities they did together, and what role the intergenerational friend played in their lives. They also inquired if there was a difference between age discrepant friends and age peer friends, how others reacted to their friendships with people of different ages, and if they perceived a generation gap in their intergenerational relationships. A number of interesting findings emerged.

First, intergenerational friendships are established in a variety of contexts. The most frequently mentioned location was the workplace, and over 50% of the participants

indicated that work was important for interacting with people of diverse ages. The second most frequently mentioned place was a school setting. Other common locations were church and recreational activities.

Second, people in intergenerational relationships discuss various topics in their conversations. Over 60% of the interviewees stated that they talked about their families or their romantic relationships. Another common subject was work, and 40% of participants indicated that they discussed work-related issues with their age discrepant friends. Other topics people shared were sports, recreational activities, and stories about travel or other point of interest. Referring to these results, Williams and Nussbaum (2001) noted, "One can conclude that talk within intergenerational friendships is very similar to talk in age-peer friendships" (p. 218). Another similarity that emerged from the interviews was the activities in which intergenerational friends partake when together. Many people indicated that talking was the primary activity in their intergenerational friendships. However, a majority of responses were focused on recreation, including participating in sporting events, exercising, traveling, and going out to bars. Additionally, approximately one-third of participants discussed eating together. According to Holladay and Kerns (1997), each activity participants mentioned was described as conventional and mutually enjoyable.

Concerning the role that intergenerational relationships play in people's lives, Holladay and Kerns (1997) reported that several individuals likened their age discrepant friendships to mentoring relationships, but the majority of participants viewed their intergenerational friendships as true friendships. As Williams and Nussbaum (2001) stated, this was significant because "it had been suggested in the literature that an

intergenerational friendship may be less an 'equal' friendship and more a mentoring friendship" (p. 219). However, when asked if intergenerational friendships differed from friendships with people of a similar age, the participants were equally divided, with one half claiming that there was a difference and the other half reporting that there was not. Some respondents claimed that their intergenerational friendships were divergent from their peer age friendships due to differences in the life stages of younger and older individuals. Holladay and Kerns (1997) also noted, "Interestingly, a difference identified by several participants was that they experienced a greater sense of 'validation' or 'acceptance' from their intergenerational friends than their age peers" (p. 21). As a result, they inferred that the differences in age discrepant friendships that individuals perceive are positive, and resulted in an increased sense of value in intergenerational friendships, rather than depreciation.

When asked about a generation gap, respondents were again equally divided. The participants who sensed or perceived a generation gap attributed it to factors such as differences in preferences and tastes, uncommon historical experiences, divergent values, and variance in maturity levels and experiences related to work and relationships. It is noteworthy, however, that many interviewees who reported that there was a generation gap also indicated that it did not restrict their friendship.

In a later study, Holladay and Kerns (1999) compared age differences in close and casual friendships. The participants reported that in close friendships, age peer relationships were experienced more "intensely" and feelings related to companionships, satisfaction, intimacy, nurturance and reliable alliance were significantly greater than in than age discrepant relationships. Concerning casual friendships, age discrepant

relationships were experienced more intensely, and admiration was significantly higher in age discrepant friendships than age peer friendships. Another interesting trend is that the age discrepant friends were more than twice as likely to be deemed close friends than casual friends. Such data suggest that although age discrepant relationships may not be experienced as strongly or as passionately, they are still considered close and important friendships. It also indicates that age discrepant friendships often serve functions related to offering companionship, participating in enjoyable or leisurely activities together, and providing and receiving respect and admiration.

Additional Positive Aspects of Intergenerational Relationships

Work, education, and service-based relationships, as well as friendship and companionship, all have numerous unique features, particularly concerning roles, levels of intimacy, and means of providing various forms of support. However, each type of relationship also potentially has several commonalities that are important positive outcomes of intergenerational connections, including social support, reciprocity, shared experiences and transference, generativity, and wisdom.

Social Support

Social support is important and necessary throughout the life course. It is essentially defined as the "help and assistance we give to and receive from others" (Novak, 2006, p. 350). However, beyond this basic definition, social support encompasses many aspects of social relations. Morgan and Kunkel (2007) noted that it includes "the network of people we have contact with, the amount of contact we have

with them, the support and help that we get from those around us, or the confidence that we can count on others when needed" (p. 93).

Several characteristics of social support have been identified as significant. For instance, the source of support is important. Potential recipients and providers of support may include parents, children, siblings, other family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. The people with whom one exchanges support comprise a social network. Social networks are "best understood in terms of the objective characteristics that describe the people with whom an individual maintains interpersonal relations…[such as] age, gender, role relationship, years known, residential proximity, frequency of contact and the like" (Antonucci, 2001, p. 428.) Therefore, members of social networks are also an important feature of social support.

The type and function of support is also a salient factor, as social support can be received and provided in multiple ways. According to Antonucci (2001), social support is:

> An interpersonal interaction involving one of three key elements: aid, affect, or affirmation. Aid refers to instrumental or tangible support, such as lending money, helping with chores, or providing sick care. Affect refers to emotional support, such as love, affection, and caring. Affirmation refers to an agreement of acknowledgement of similarities or appropriateness of one's values or point of view. (p. 429)

Thus, support can come in a variety of forms, each of which plays a different role. Rassmussen (1998) recognized four primary functions of support, referencing House's (1981) findings on social support and stress.

Emotional support is beneficial during stressful times, and may be provided by listening, expressing empathy, providing comfort through words, touch, or nonverbal communication. Informational support may aid in providing perspective, and might come

in the form of helping identify reactions to a stressor and suggesting beneficial coping strategies. Similarly, instrumental support involves helping put essential coping behaviors into practice (Rassmussen, 1998). Appraisal support serves an anticipatory function, because the belief that support will be provided in the future if needed is also often instrumental in buffering stress (Rassmussen, 1998; Krause, 2001). Appraisal support also encompasses another key feature of social support, which is the amount of satisfaction with the support received. Satisfaction is often based on factors such as quantity, content, and quality and is important in building a strong social support system. It is also noteworthy that when assessing satisfaction, the perception of support is also important, regardless of the actual frequency and value (Antonucci, 2001; Krause, 2001). As these characteristics demonstrate, social support is complex and multifaceted.

In addition to involving a range of aspects and features, it has been widely noted that the presence or perception of a strong social support network has many positive outcomes. For instance, social support significantly influences physical health. The effects of social support impact individuals throughout the life course, but particularly in old age. Strong social support decreases the likelihood of developing heart disease, cancer, physical disability, reduced immunological functioning, alcohol abuse and dependence, and a lack of compliance to medical interventions (Rassmussen, 1998; Antonucci, Jackson, & Gibson, 1989; Atkins, Kaplan, & Toshima, 1989; Rook, Mavandadi, Sorkin, & Zettel, 2007). Such health factors also impact an individual's life span. Rassmussen (1998) noted, "The absence of meaningful social supports has been identified as one of the most powerful predictors of morbidity and mortality in older

adults" (p. 20). Thus, social support can significantly impact physical health and longevity.

Social support is also important regarding psychological health, and is regarded as "a key determinant of successful aging" (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987; Krause, 2001). Strong social support is often linked to positive mental and emotional outcomes. As Rook et al. (2007) stated:

> Social relationships…contribute to emotional well-being and quality of life. For example, close relationships influence positive affect by serving as a source of enjoyable social interaction and companionship. Research on subjective well-being confirms, moreover, that having close relationships is a reliable and powerful predictor of happiness and life satisfaction. (p. 267)

In addition to contributing to well-being, supportive relationships serve a number of other important psychological functions. For instance, social support is key in maintaining a healthy self-image. Francis (2000) claimed, "Enduring consociate relationships are an essential psychological resource in the formation and confirmation of self-concept and its continuing change and development over the lifetime" (p. 175). Social support is also important in helping people adapt to life stress (Rook et al., 2007; Krause, 2001). Given that the need for encouragement, backing, and assistance increases in difficult circumstances, social support is potentially a valuable coping resource. As Antonucci (2001) noted, "Positive aspects of support relationships appear to provide a sense of security that makes individuals feel positive about themselves and their world. People who feel more supported cope better with illness, stress, and other difficult life experiences" (p. 439). Thus, social support also fulfills many needs that lead to mental health, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction.

Reciprocity in Intergenerational Relationships

Another significant aspect of social support is reciprocity. Intergenerational

relationships are mutually beneficial, and provide numerous advantages for everyone

involved. Generations may reciprocally contribute to one another by supporting

development and growth and meeting linked and shared needs.

Supporting Growth and Development

Intergenerational relationships have the capacity to contribute to the growth and

advancement of younger and older generations. When examining child and adult

development, Newman and Smith (1997) claimed,

> A formal theory of organized intergenerational activity is not directly
> expressed in either child development or older adult theory alone.
> However, a strong rationale emerges when the two bodies of thoughts are
> considered together and the needs and characteristics of these generations
> are compared and matched (p. 16).

For example, according to theorists such as Montessori, Dewey, and Vygotsky,

interaction with older adults allows children to develop relationships with a variety of

people and gain knowledge and cultural awareness from experienced and positive role

models. Similarly, consistent with theorists such as Atchley, Butler and Lewis,

interaction with children or youth aids older adults in adapting to a loss of previous roles

and finding new, important positions in society as well as in finding meaning in their

lives (Newman & Smith, 1997). Thus, intergenerational relationships promote growth

and well-being for younger and older people in a number of ways.

In addition to benefiting from intergenerational relationships, younger and older

adults are developmentally positioned to help those of different ages. Newman and Smith

(1997) stated,

>The life-span approach of Erikson, whose work includes all generations, describes developmental tasks for the oldest and youngest age groups that parallel each other as life crises are reworked in succeeding stages. These parallel structures reflect Erikson's basic premise that the issues of each life stage are never fully resolved but reoccur throughout life in increasingly mature and complex forms. The repetitive and parallel structure of an individual's life stages reinforces the argument for intergenerational exchange. (p. 17)

According to this theory, children and young adults' developmental tasks correspond with adults' developmental tasks. For instance, a child's need to form a sense of basic trust is met by adults' capacity for intimacy. Likewise, an adolescent or young adult's need to develop a sense of identity is accomplished in part by family and community, which is supported by an older adult's desire to leave a legacy of values and knowledge to family and community (Erikson, 1963). Therefore, intergenerational relationships sustain and advance the development of different age groups, as they are positioned within the life course to serve and support one another.

Meeting Linked and Shared Needs

In addition to supporting one another in growth and development, the needs of older generations often correspond with the needs of younger generations. For instance, older adults' needs to nurture, to teach, to have a successful life review, to share cultural mores, to communicate positive values and to have a legacy are directly linked to younger generations' needs to be nurtured, to be taught, to learn from and about the past, to have a cultural identity, to have positive role models, and to be connected to preceding generations (Newman & Smith, 1997, p. 18). These needs clearly demonstrate interdependence between generations. In addition to having linked needs, younger and older generations also have shared needs.

> Accompanying these reciprocal needs is another set of needs that are shared by these generations. These needs are common to both the young and the old, are related to the placement and role of these generations within the life continuum, and reflect treatment of the young and the older by the larger society. (Newman & Smith, 1997, p. 18)

Scholars have posited a number of shared needs between generations, including the need to feel safe and secure, the need to have a place or role in society, the need to be valued, the need to be accepted, the need to be cared for, the need to experience stability, the need to have access to quality education, and the need for contact between generations (Newman & Smith, 1997; McCrea & Smith, 1997). Interaction between generations has the potential to meet each of these needs. Through intergenerational relationships, younger and older generations can contribute to others' lives as well as improve their own.

Another advantage of non-familial intergenerational relations is that non-obligatory companionships provide people of all ages with "a special type of positive feedback and mutual appreciation" (Antonuncci, 2001, p. 439). Intergenerational social support from non-familial ties is important due to recent changes in society concerning geographic dispersion and declining family ties (Ward, 1997). Shifts in demographic trends and family relations have resulted in decreased intergenerational interaction. Ward (1997) noted, "Concentrations of older adults have occurred primarily because of the emigration of younger persons from one region to another…a highly visible but less common reason for the increase in the concentration of elderly in a particular area is the migration of older adults" (p. 23). Younger people move primarily for economic reasons, whereas older people often move to new retirement communities or locations with physical or cultural attractions.

One of the consequences of such geographic dispersion is that families are increasingly living apart, at times with significant distances separating them. According to Ward (1997), another factor that contributes to weakening family relations is "less extended family living and thus...the elderly and children...have less day-to-day contact" (p. 26). As a result, although many people still stay in contact with family members though phone, e-mail and other technologies and travel is more viable for holidays and special occasions, younger people and older people in families interact less often. This creates a necessity for non-familial relationships in order to fulfill younger and older people's need for social support.

Another important aspect of reciprocity in intergenerational relationships is the capacity to address the challenges of youth and old age. For instance, having friendships or relationships with older adults may serve to replace or enhance the amount and quality of care that younger people receive. "All children need caring adults in their lives. Although positive, sustained relationships with parents represent a critical resource for children, other adults can provide support that is similar to the support that a parent provides" (Jekielek, Moor, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002, p. 1). This is particularly important in the context of at-risk youth, who may have neglectful, abusive, or dysfunctional families and not receive appropriate or adequate support from family (Vanderven, 2004). Thus, for troubled or distressed children or younger adults, intergenerational relationships can contribute to emotional development, improve social skills, and provide a source for trust, intimacy, and meaning.

Likewise, having younger friends also addresses many of the challenges of aging and maintaining strong social support systems in later life. For instance, it lessens the

impact of a decreasing social network due to the deaths of peers (Matthews, 1986). It also helps eradicate issues such as disease and disability, as younger people may be in better health than older friends and thus able to travel, adjust according to sensory needs, and make other accommodations that aging individuals may require in order to remain socially engaged.

Therefore, the reciprocal nature of positive intergenerational relations is advantageous for people of all ages. For younger adults, friendships and social support from older adults provide them with guidance, instruction, and encouragement (Barrera, Jr. & Bonds, 2005). For older adults, friendship and social support from younger adults offer companionship and care. Moreover, for younger and older generations, numerous shared and linked needs are met, and intergenerational relations can improve the lives of younger and older participants. Thus, intergenerational relations are reciprocal, as both younger and older adults benefit in various ways.

Transference, Generativity, and Wisdom

Intergenerational relationships are not just important on an individual level, but also essential for society. The nature of generations ensures that civilization will continue, thereby creating a system of stability. However, in addition to sustaining society, intergenerational relationships may provide support to others and even generate social change. Thus, every generation has the capacity to not only maintain society, but also improve it. Therefore, generations may contribute to others and have a positive impact on others through transference, generativity, and wisdom.

Generations have important roles concerning the transference of culture and legacy, as well as potentially promoting social and political change. In addition to his

extensive work defining generation, Mannheim explored the roles that generations play

within society. He proposed that they have the following characteristics:

(1) new participants in the cultural process are emerging, whilst
(2) former participants in that process are continually disappearing;
(3) members of any one generation can participate only in a temporally limited section of historical processes, and
(4) it is therefore necessary continually to transmit the accumulated cultural heritage;
(5) the transition from generation to generation is a continuous process. (Mannheim, 1997, p.37)

Thus, as a result of collective experiences within a cultural and historical setting,

generations significantly impact society by altering its values, views, and attitudes.

Moreover, due to the cyclical nature of generations, cultural heritage is passed down as

new aspects of culture are emerging. Edmunds and Turner (2002) noted:

> Rejecting a monocausal account of historical change, Mannheim focuses
> on the way age groups could act as agents of social change and become
> 'the carriers of intellectual and organizational alternatives to the status
> quo.' He therefore conceptualized generations as sources of opposition,
> challenging existing societal norms and values and bringing about social
> change through collective generational organization. (p. 8)

Edmunds and Turner (2002) used Mannheim's work as the basis for their definition of

generations as either "passive generations" or "active generations," and posited that

passive generations accept the state of culture and society with little to no resistance,

whereas active generations focus on contributing to society, potentially creating positive

outcomes or social change. In the context of intergenerational relationships, generations

may serve others through generativity and wisdom.

Generativity and Wisdom

Generativity and wisdom are important aspects of later life, and often viewed as

the optimal outcomes of human development. Generativity is evident in familial and

societal relations. Erik Erikson first introduced the idea of generativity in his eight stages

of psychosocial development. Erikson (1963) proposed that during middle adulthood, or

ages 35 to 65, individuals develop either a sense of self-absorption and stagnation or a

sense of generativity. Generativity is defined as "the adult's concern for and commitment

to the next generation, as expressed through parenting, teaching, mentoring, leadership,

and a host of other activities that aim to leave a positive legacy of the self for the future"

(St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2003, p. 4).

Although the initial theory assigned generativity as a feature of mid-life, it has

been extended to the later years as well. As McAdams and Logan (2003) noted,

"Generative concerns and issues can arise at virtually any point in the adult life course"

(p. 18). Thus, generativity is not necessarily assigned to a specific stage of life, but rather

can be a developmental task at any age. Manheimer (2003) claimed:

> If, as Erikson argued, the generative orientation is to nurturing the next
> generations and to cherish that which outlives oneself, then a potential
> resource of generativity can be found among members of the older
> generation. The perspective of a long life prepares and inspires older
> people to become caretakers of the future. Capable of reaching back to the
> past through recollection and forward to the future in hope, they are well
> position to share their knowledge with those younger, who will one day
> follow in their footsteps (p. 120).

Thus, older adults are also capable of expressing generativity, and often feel invested in

younger generations and the future of society.

Four types or domains of generativity have been identified. Kotre and Kotre

(1998) stated:

> Biological generativity refers to the begetting, bearing, and nursing of
> children - the passing on of living substance (genes, blood, milk) from one
> generation to the next. Parental generativity involves the rearing of
> children and their initiation into a family's traditions. It is distinct from
> biological generativity because people sometimes raise children who are

not their genetic offspring. Technical generativity is expressed in the teaching of skills and techniques: how to read, how to repair a car, how to perform a healing ritual, how to write a legal brief, and so on. Cultural generativity, the fourth type, refers to the conservation, renovation, or creation of collective meaning systems, be those systems religious, artistic, ideological, scientific, or commonsensical. (p. 368)

Older adults may practice generativity in any of these ways, but within communities and society, they may demonstrate the technical or cultural domains of generativity through activities such as volunteering, mentoring, tutoring, and providing care. Older adults may also fulfill various needs related to social support, and become younger people's companions or friends.

Like generativity, wisdom is considered an important aspect of human development. Wisdom has been a philosophical concept for centuries, but psychological interest in wisdom is relatively recent, and previous to wisdom research, it was only an aspect of broader theories (Brugman, 2006). For instance, in Erikson's (1963) theory of psychosocial development, wisdom was considered the most favorable result of the last psychosocial conflict, or ego-integrity. In late adulthood, or ages 65 to death, individuals reflect on their lives and feel either integrity versus despair. Despair is feeling that one's life has been meaningless or incomplete. Conversely, integrity is a sense of contentment, and a feeling that one has contributed to life and society (Erikson, 1963). People who achieve integrity find meaning in their lives, including their successes and failures, accept death without fear, and thereby develop wisdom. Thus, like generativity, wisdom is viewed as a central task in adulthood and old age.

Wisdom has been defined and conceptualized in numerous ways. Clayton (1982) claims that wisdom is the capacity to understand human nature, which is paradoxical, conflicting, and susceptible to change. Baltes defines wisdom as "exceptional insight into

life matters and good judgment and advice about difficult life problems" (Novak, 2006, p.

138). Thus, wisdom involves having numerous qualities, including having knowledge,

experience, and the capacity to make considered and sagacious decisions or conclusions.

It is important to note that wisdom is not necessarily an outcome of adulthood or

old age, and there is no empirical evidence that supports a positive relationship between

wisdom and age. Scholars explain this in a variety of ways. Some propose that wisdom is

only a potential in old age, and thus the relationship between age and wisdom is

potentially positive. Brugman (2006) explains, "It is potentially age related in the sense

that wisdom, being timeless and universal knowledge...enables elderly people to prepare

for the physical and social decline of old age" (p. 463). Thus, wisdom is a possible, but

not always achieved, outcome of human development. Pasupathi, Staudinger, and Baltes

(2001) proposed the five criteria of wisdom, in the order of which they developmentally

appear:

(1) Rich factual knowledge about life matters.
(2) Rich procedural knowledge about life problems.
(3) Life span contextualism; Knowledge about the contexts of life and
    their temporal (developmental) relationships.
(4) Relativism: Knowledge about differences in values and priorities.
(5) Uncertainty: Knowledge about the relative indeterminacy and
    unpredictability of life and ways to manage it.

Thus, first the initial, basic criteria must develop and then the metalevel criteria may

follow. As a group, the five criteria of wisdom characterize it as "a complex and dynamic

system of expert knowledge" that involves "the conduct and understanding of life"

(Baltes & Smith, 2008). As a result of this work, many theorists have studied wisdom as

a feature of development and found evidence that adolescence and young adulthood are

"the cradle of wisdom" (Brugman, 2006). Thus, wisdom is conceptualized as an aspect of and potentially positive outcome of human development.

Individuals with wisdom are able to integrate information, knowledge, and experience to provide a holistic and balanced view (Baltes, Glück, & Kunzmann, 2002). As a result, wise people have the capacity to interpret situations objectively and provide insight into human behavior and the conditions of life. Consequently, in the context of intergenerational relationships, older individuals who have developed wisdom are in a position to advise, support, and guide others concerning life knowledge, moral principles, and difficult situations or dilemmas that may arise throughout the life course. Additionally, wise people may have a positive impact on society. Novak (2006) claimed:

> Wisdom makes older people more skilled at working in everyday life. This could allow older people to play a unique role in modern society. Baltes and his colleagues suggest that a society with more older people will have a greater storehouse of wisdom. Society could use that wisdom to redefine problems that escape rational and technical solutions. More older people thinking and advising about practical problem could enhance the quality of life for everyone (p. 139)

Thus, it is important to recognize the potential knowledge, breadth of experience, judgment skills, and wisdom that older people may have and encourage them to consider, support, teach, guide, and advise younger generations.

Positive Aspects and Outcomes of Intergenerational Relationships

When intergenerational relationships are encouraged and supported, many positive outcomes may occur, including the development of meaningful, reciprocal relationships that provide social support, the opportunity to share experiences and wisdom, and the practice of transference and generativity. One of the most effective

ways in which intergenerational interaction can be promoted is through intergenerational

contact interventions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Intergenerational Service-Learning

In order to challenge the negative outcomes of intergenerational relationships and foster more positive outcomes between younger and older people, numerous intergenerational contact interventions and intergenerational programs have been established. As Williams and Nussbaum (2001) noted:

> Recognizing the inherent problems with minimal community contact, programs of organized contact have been devised to promote intergenerational understanding. Negative perceptions of old age, combined with evidence that there is minimal intergenerational contact outside the family, have spurred the growth and development of formal intergenerational contact programs designed to counteract such forces. (p. 215)

Intergenerational contact interventions may be divided into two basic categories: intergenerational programs and intergenerational service-learning. Defining each classification is difficult, due to the diverse array of experiences and characteristics each type encompasses.

Furthermore, distinguishing between the two categories is also somewhat complicated, particularly because they have several commonalities. For instance, the focus of both classifications is facilitating contact between younger and older people. Additionally, they both aim to solve social issues by improving intergenerational relations and attitudes toward aging and other age groups, and often involve a community service component. Developing and executing intergenerational programming and intergenerational service-learning is also similar, as they each involve preparation, action, reflection, recognition, and evaluation. McCrea (2004) claimed,

>Intergenerational programs are defined by interactions between children, youth, and older adults that are on-going and mutually beneficial and that result in the development of relationships. Intergenerational service-learning implies that young people will provide direct service to older adults as part of their learning experience. (p. 6)

Thus, the primary distinction is that service-learning contains an educational component that aims to enhance the acquisition and integration of knowledge through practical experience. However, participants in intergenerational programs may also learn from their experience, and interaction may occur in an educational context, such as a classroom or after school program. Thus, in order to better define and distinguish between intergenerational contact interventions, it is useful to examine intergenerational programming as well as intergenerational service-learning.

Intergenerational Programming

Intergenerational programming is most simply defined as facilitated interaction between younger and older people. The International Consortium for Intergenerational Programs defines intergenerational programs as "social vehicles that create purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations" (as cited in Kaplan, Liu, & Radhakrishna, 2003, para 3). Many different types of intergenerational programs exist. Some are education based programs, such as The Senior Citizen School Volunteer Program or Experience Corps, in which older adults serve as tutors, mentors, teacher's aids, oral historians, and other similar resources. Many interventions are centered on visiting or friendships development, such as Friendly Visitors or Grandletters, in which youth and older adults spend time together, either in person or through letters or phone calls. Other programs address community issues, such as Neighborhoods 2000, which focuses on civic beautification, or Generations, which

provides affordable child care and adult day care through an interactive and collaborative partnership between a child care center and an adult day service program.

Although all are designed to improve intergenerational relations, the rationale for designing and implementing intergenerational programs varies, as many interventions concentrate on different outcomes. For instance, some interventions focus on the micro level, or the impact of intergenerational programs on individuals, whereas others center on the macro level, or the impact of intergenerational programs on society. Programs that focus on individual impact argue that contact interventions may help provide caring adults in youths' lives, increase social capital and support networks, alleviate attachment issues in neglected children, positively impact development, strengthen resilience, and improve social skills in individuals (Vanderven, 2004). Programs that are designed to have a societal impact claim to address various social issues, such as improving attitudes toward aging or strengthening or replacing weakened family ties (McCrea & Smith, 1997). Regardless of the outcomes that intergenerational interventions focus on, promoting interaction between youth and elders has the potential to influence individuals, communities, and society.

However, although it is generally agreed that intergenerational contact interventions are potentially beneficial, there is disagreement about how effective they are in practice. Some scholars claim that empirical investigations confirm the value of intergenerational programming in terms of attitudinal changes students experienced toward the aging process and adults in later life (Aday, Sims, & Evans, 1991; Cartensen, Mason, & Caldwell, 1982). However, as Williams and Nussbaum (2001) stated:

> The hypothesis that contract improves relationships between groups has a
> certain face-value appeal; after all, if we can increase different groups'

knowledge of each other we can foster understanding and so improve relationships...Unfortunately, findings consistently failed to live up to early expectations that contact per se would improve attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately intergroup relationships. (p. 215)

Scholars who are hesitant to accept positive empirical findings also argue that much of the rationale for intergenerational interventions are assumptions and that there is little support that the state of intergenerational relations is declining and negative attitudes toward other generations are prevailing (Vernon, 1999; Ward, 1997).

However, others maintain that the present body of research is inadequate, which results in inconsistent findings. Fox and Giles (1993) stated in their critique of intergenerational programming research that it has not produced strong, clear results for several reasons. First, much of the research is not theory-driven. Second, a majority of studies are short-term and do not examine long-term changes in attitude or behavior. Third, many studies use different measures to find results. For instance, some investigations only examine either younger or older participants rather than all involved parties. Likewise, some studies measure cognitive outcomes whereas others examine behavior outcomes.

Fox and Giles (1993) concluded that although 69% of the studies they reviewed indicated positive outcomes from intergenerational contact, the results were mixed. They proposed that longitudinal, theory driven research that is concerned with both generations and focused on the behavioral and communicative aspects of contact will improve the quality of findings. Therefore, further research is required to determine the impact of intergenerational interventions, and although scholars dispute the degree and conclusiveness of research findings on attitudinal changes and improved relations, all agree that intergenerational programs are potentially beneficial in this regard.

Intergenerational Service-Learning

Intergenerational service-learning is often similar to intergenerational programming but has many unique aspects, in particular, an educational and reflective component. Additionally, research indicates that there is strong support for positive outcomes in such service-learning initiatives, with more consistent findings than the research on intergenerational programming. Thus, intergenerational service-learning is one of the most constructive and feasible ways of achieving more positive intergenerational relations and improving attitudes toward aging.

Service-Learning

Before examining intergenerational service-learning, it is important to first define service-learning and review its ideologies and practices. Numerous definitions of service-learning have been proposed, each with their own specific meanings and criteria. The National Society for Experiential Education (1994) defines service-learning broadly and generally as "any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intention learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning through the experience" (as cited in Furco, 1996, p. 2). Bringle and Hatcher (1995) posited a somewhat narrower definition, noting:

> Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service-activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (p.112)

The Corporation for National & Community Service provides an even more detailed definition, claiming that service-learning:

‣ is a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of communities;
‣ is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program and the community;
‣ helps foster civic responsibility;
‣ is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the education components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and,
‣ provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on the service experience (as cited in McCrea, 2004, p. 3).

Jacoby (1996) expanded these definitions of service-learning by recognizing service-learning as a philosophy, rather than just a program or experience, and claimed that service-learning is based on ideals of human growth and purpose, social vision, learning, knowledge, community, service to others, reciprocity, and empowerment.

In order to refine and elaborate on basic definitions, scholars have conceptualized service-learning in various ways. For instance, Sigmon (1994) extends the definition of service-learning into a typology, claiming that the various categories involve the balance between learning goals and service outcomes (See Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Service-Learning Typology
(Source: Sigmon, 1994)

Thus, in service-learning, such as one-shot or episodic volunteering, service and learning goals are completely separate. In service-LEARNING, such as internships and practica, learning goals are most important and service outcomes are less emphasized. In SERVICE-learning, such as ongoing volunteering or community service, service outcomes are primary and learning goals are secondary. In SERVICE-LEARNING, service outcomes and learning goals are equally important and each improves the other for all participants.

Furco (1996) expands on Sigmon's typology, using a continuum based on the balance between beneficiary (recipient vs. provider of service) and focus (service vs. learning). (See Figure 2)

Figure 2. Distinctions Among Service Programs

(Source: Furco, 1996)

He argues, "Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring" (p. 5). These typologies seek to fully define service-learning and provide criteria to discern it from other service programs or experiential education initiatives.

Toward a Comprehensive Definition of Service-Learning

As the various definitions and conceptual frameworks of the term indicate, service-learning is a rather broad term that may encompass a variety of experiences that involve learning and community service. As it is widely debated on, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive definition. However, each interpretation has common themes. First, service-learning is experiential, meaning that it involves or is based on experience or observation. Second, service-learning should aim to meet an actual community need. Moreover, it should be mutually beneficial to the service provider and the service-recipient, and thus the partnership between the community agency and educational institution should be reciprocal. Third, service-learning should place equal focus on the learning and service aspects of the experience. Fourth, reflection, or time for students to think about their experiences and connect them to educational issues, is an important feature of service-learning. Thus, despite the fact that the term service-learning is often used in a variety of ways by different scholars and practitioners, each definition has common themes and criteria that form a comprehensive description.

Models of Service-Learning: Theoretical Approaches

There are numerous models and frameworks used to classify diverse service-learning experiences. In terms of theoretical approaches, service-learning is typically divided into three types: philanthropic, civic engagement, and communitarian. Each model applies a different philosophy to service-learning.

The philanthropic approach is considered an additive position in service-learning. Speck (2001) noted:

> It holds that all that needs to be done to the traditional classroom is to add a public service component. Public service is integrated into the classroom by ensuring that students consider the impact of the service, but the impulse behind the philanthropic or additive approach is helping others who are in need of help, with the added benefit of honing students skills and encouraging students to feel good about themselves. (p. 5)

Thus, it is grounded in the concepts of charity, social change, altruism, social justice and compensatory justice (Battistoni, 1997; Hoppe, 2004). Additionally, the model supports the idea that education should introduce social issues, in addition to promoting self-direction and neutrality rather than a particular political stance. Therefore, service-learning as a pedagogy should be value-free and uphold the proper social and intellectual role of educational institutions by allowing students to come to their own conclusions about issues (Abel, 2004).

Critics of the philanthropic model claim that it is based on the perceived need for charity and thus promotes altruism rather than neutrality. Moreover, opponents argue that it is essentially based on people's acknowledgment that they have social and economic benefits over others, and thus are obligated to help the less fortunate, which creates a power differential between service providers and service recipients. As a result, the philanthropic model validates privilege and thereby violates the principles of freedom, equality, and democratic education (Sementelli, 2004). Other critics note that regardless of its underlying philosophy, the philanthropic model is an additive position that merely requires the addition of a service component, rather than revitalization of the education system.

The civic approach is strongly grounded in the concept of civic engagement. Civic engagement is defined as "those activities which invigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education. Civic engagement activities include objectives such

developing civic skills, inspiring engaged citizenship, promoting a civil society, and

building the commonwealth" (Campus Compact, 1999, p. 1). The civic model is

distinguished from the philanthropic approach in that, as Battistoni (1997) noted, "the

idea is not that the well-off 'owe' something to the less fortunate, but that free democratic

communities depend on mutual responsibility and that rights without obligations are

ultimately not sustainable" (p. 151). Therefore, unlike the philanthropic approach, the

civic approach is not based in altruism, but on "enlightened self-interest" (p. 151).

Another key aspect that distinguishes the civic model from the philanthropic

model involves the function of school or universities in society. The civic approach is not

neutral, but value-ridden, and posits that educational institutions should play an active

role in working toward social change. As Speck (2001) argued, the civic approach is

based on the belief that:

(1) the American social order is fragmented, lacking a sense of community,
(2) lack of community has produced injustices of various kinds,
(3) higher education is deeply implicated in the perpetuation of injustice, and
(4) higher education must be radically transformed to meet its obligation to produce citizens who can promote justice in a democratic society (p. 5)

Thus, the civic approach finds the education system responsible for informing and

instructing younger generations to advance democratic ideals and work for social change.

Therefore, it is "a pedagogy that both threatens the status quo of higher education and

promises remarkable benefits once the status quo is replaced by the structures necessary

to sustain a long-term service-learning pedagogy" (Speck, 2001, p. 5). Due to this

philosophical foundation, the civic model is viewed as a radical philosophy that seeks

significant dramatic transformation in the educational system, as opposed to just adding service components to courses.

Critics of the civic approach, however, argue that although civic engagement is a goal in higher education, it should not be viewed as a universal solution (Exley, 2004). Additionally, opponents claim that the civic approach is potentially dangerous or harmful because it may result in developing youth who espouse the beliefs and ideals of their instructors. Exley (2004) claimed that the civic model has merit despite these criticisms, noting, "It is one, just one, effective means for providing high-quality educational experiences for our students" (p. 96). Thus, although it has philosophical flaws, the civic model is recognized as a noteworthy approach, particularly due to the importance of civic engagement and educational institutions' role in producing active and involved citizens.

Unlike the philanthropic approach, the communitarian model is more difficult to distinguish from the civic model, due to numerous shared characteristics and similarities. Codispoti (2004) defines communitarianism as "concerned members of communities who share common values and are responsible to each other and for their community" (p. 145). The communitarian model is often based on democratic citizenship, but unlike the civic model, this aspect is not the focus of the approach. Rather, communitarianism maintains that humans are social creatures whose best interests are served when they reject a rights-bearing approach to the social order and adopt instead the ideal of open and inclusive communities (Codispoti, 2004). Like the civic approach, it is oriented toward social justice and aims to bring social issues into the classroom as well as encourage students to take social responsibility, and serve and identify with communities outside the classroom.

Opponents of the communitarian approach claim that it is not as clearly defined as the civic model, and that it is not as applicable. Murphy (2004) argued that the civic model is based on "outdated concepts of individualism and autonomy in relation to community and social action" (p. 119) Although service-learning has the potential to enhance students' education, critics doubt that it can instill the social roles and social responsibilities in students that communitarianism requires. Despite these issues, however, communitarianism is valued for its sense of community values and social justice orientation.

Each of the theoretical models offers a different set of values, philosophies, and goals concerning service-learning. Although they all have strengths and weaknesses, the models are important and useful because practitioners may choose an approach that best fits with their principles and views on service-learning, as well as their degree of commitment to service-learning. Regardless of the theoretical stance utilized, the philanthropic, civic, and communitarian models support the idea that service-learning can potentially enhance and even revolutionize education and communities.

Models of Service-Learning: Categorizing Service-Learning Courses

In addition to theoretical approaches, models of service-learning have been developed that divide various course experiences into categories. Hefferman (2001) defined the "Six Models of Service-Learning," which are six basic classifications of service-learning courses. This typology is important, because it is critical for faculty, staff, students, or other practitioners who may develop and implement a service-learning course or redesign an existing course using service-learning to explore each model before determining the appropriate fit for their curriculum and objectives (Hefferman, 2001).

The first model of is "pure" service-learning, which refers to classes that use the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens as their intellectual basis. Thus, an essential aspect of the course is placing students in the community to serve. These classes are not restricted to any particular course, level, or discipline.

Discipline-based service-learning involves a semester long service commitment and a reflection component that encourages students to consider their experiences using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding. Problem-based service learning is a model in which students, or teams of students, work with community partners to understand a particular community problem or need, and generate recommendations for the community or develop a solution to the issue. Thus, the model is based on the assumption that the students will have knowledge that they can apply to the community problem. For instance, marketing majors might design ads for a local food bank, women studies majors might lead female support groups, or dietetics majors might begin a community health program.

Capstone courses are typically offered for students with majors or minors in a specific discipline, and are usually reserved only for advanced students or students in their final year. These courses encourage students to synthesize the knowledge they have gained throughout their coursework, integrate the students' understanding of their discipline, and apply it to pertinent service work in the community. Capstones allow students to transition from the theory to practice, as they gain professional experience and meet community needs.

Service internships are similar to traditional internships because they are typically intensive, involve students working a significant number of hours a week in a community setting, and require students to produce work that is of value to the community partner. However, service internships also contain frequent opportunities for reflection, which allows students to analyze their experiences using discipline-based theories. Reflection may be in the form of one-on-one discussion with faculty or advisors, discussion groups with peers that are led by faculty, or other forms of communication that provide students with continuous feedback, such as e-mail or blogging. Yet another significant characteristic of service internships is the focus on reciprocity, which emphasizes the importance of students and community partners equally benefiting from the experience.

The sixth and final model, undergraduate community-based action research, is a newer approach that is increasingly popular. This model is similar to an independent study for students who are highly experienced in service work. It involves students working closely with faculty to serve within the community as they learn research methodology.

The Purpose of Service-Learning in Education

Service-learning is often viewed as an alternative to or reform of traditional pedagogy. One of the primary criticisms of traditional education is that it separates learning form the community, social issues, and real world application. Thus, the goals of higher education — researching, teaching, and service — are not interrelated as they theoretically should be (Cushman, 1999). As a result, traditional education is not empowering students to use or integrate their knowledge in practical settings, nor

encouraging and supporting the development of the skills and attitudes required for students to seek out solutions to social problems (Speck, 2001).

Service-learning is a response or solution to these weaknesses in traditional education. As Speck (2001) noted, service-learning "unites research, teaching and service; combines community work with classroom instruction; and prepares students to participate in public life, thus integrating theory and practice" (p. 4). Thus, service-learning may improve the quality of education students receive. Furthermore, service-learning aims to foster a sense of social responsibility and community engagement in students that will last beyond their educational experience; ultimately the students will develop a lifelong commitment to service and solving social problems.

The Purpose of Service-Learning in the Community

In addition to exploring service-learning in education, it is important to consider the impact of service-learning in the community, particularly due to the importance of mutually beneficial relationships. Service-learning has the potential to meet a variety of community needs, by encouraging and supporting students to work with community partners to provide humanitarian aid, develop new initiatives, and to contribute to individuals and agencies.

Furthermore, proponents of service-learning claim that, in addition to its pedagogical purposes, service-learning is a remedy for fractured community. Astin (1993) noted, "During the past forty or fifty years, American universities have come to be dominated by three powerful and interrelated values: materialism, individualism, and competitiveness" (p. 4). Thus, although higher education is producing scholars, it is not promoting community. Moreover, "because the academy is intertwined with other

institutions that comprise American culture, it is both a symptom and cause of the

problem of [fractured] community (Speck, 2001, p. 6). Professors and universities can

help solve this problem by connecting theory learned in the classroom with student

involvement in community activities outside the classroom. Thus, service-learning will

allow students to build relationships with people and agencies in the community, as well

as feel invested in the state of their communities, thereby strengthening the students'

commitment to civic engagement and the community.

Objections to Service-Learning and Possible Solutions

Despite the promising aspects of service-learning, there are many objections to it,

including the amount of time required. One of the primary arguments against service-

learning is that it uses up time that should be spent studying course content, and thus it is

a "soft" form of education. However, as Speck (2001) claimed:

> Professors will not only spend more time than usual setting up service-
> learning in their classes but will also have to readjust their thinking about
> what constitutes effective education. They will need to reconsider the
> belief that stuffing students with content knowledge is the sole or the most
> important function of academic education. (p. 10)

An additional potential solution to this problem is encouraging advanced students or staff

members to either assist with or execute the development of service-learning experiences

in order to lessen the time commitment service-learning may require.

Another objection to service-learning is the potentially negative impact

community service can have on students and the community. Furco (1996) indicated that

the definitions and practices of service-learning vary between campuses and individual

professors, and some scholars argue that some teachers will use service-learning in a way

that is more harmful to students than beneficial. Michels (2007) claimed that many of the

activities used in service-learning programs are politically motivated and embody the

professors' beliefs, ideals, and affiliations. He asserted:

> In any event, much service-learning is not so much motivated by a notion
> of charity, as much as it is a way for professors to get students to
> understand the evils of capitalism and American foreign policy. In short,
> service-learning is a subtle but clever form of indoctrination. (para. 7)

Thus, the impact of service-learning on students is not necessarily positive, and can even

possibly have negative impacts on their education and development.

Concerning the impact on community, critics argue that the majority of faculty

have not received training on integrating community service into their courses, and

therefore the professors and students may potentially have a damaging impact on the

community. One of the major contributors to this outcome is a lack of training, for both

professors and students. Schutz and Gere (1998) noted that students may enter

communities viewing themselves as "liberal saviors" and thus create a power differential

between the student and the member of the community (p. 133). Cushman (1999) agreed,

stating, "Indeed, if the university representatives understand themselves as coming to the

rescue of community residents, students will enact this missionary ideology" (p. 6). In

addition to negatively impacting the students and community, this outcome invalidates

one of the purposes of service-learning, which is a mutually beneficial relationship

between the service providers and the service receivers.

Although these criticisms are valid and important, such issues may be addressed

by providing students, staff, and faculty with the education and training required.

Teaching faculty about service and service-learning will permit them to pass relevant

knowledge on to their students to ensure that they understand the goals and philosophies

of student learning and enter their communities with the appropriate attitude and skills.

Additionally, collaborating with community partners and coordinating orientations and further training for students will help students serve and meet the community's needs in the most effective way possible.

Another objection is that there is a great deal of difficulty of having the required amount of resources needed to successfully execute a service-learning program, and the lack of training and support in designing and implementing service-learning into the classroom (Chapin, 1998). Such barriers render faculty unwilling or unable to use service-learning in their courses. However, these challenges can be overcome, especially with support from the university. Resources should be allocated toward helping professors implement service-learning experiences, particularly in the form of a service-learning center (Speck, 2001). Such centers can assist in providing financial support and transportation, and more importantly, training and educational resources. Furthermore, service-learning centers can ensure that the coordination between the university and community partners is effective and mutually beneficial (Sax & Aston, 1997). Although such resource allocation is often difficult due to budget issues, advocates of service-learning maintain that it should be a priority, particularly due to higher education's commitment to service.

The Effectiveness of Service-Learning

One of the primary concerns for both proponents and opponents of service-learning is its effectiveness as a pedagogical practice. However, the body of empirical research on service-learning is varied and unconvincing. Although many critics argue that this indicates that it is not useful, Speck (2001) asserted that because service-learning is a relatively new method of teaching, conclusive findings should not be expected. In

addition to the fact that service-learning is a recently developed pedagogy, the existing

research is limited and thus inadequate. As Giles and Eyler (1998) contended, "Faculty

and administrators are intensely interested in this issue but convincing evidence of the

importance of service-learning to subject matter learning is still lacking" (p. 67). Thus,

further research must be conducted before definitive conclusions can be formed about the

effectiveness of service-learning.

Although it is limited, there is research that has contributed to the current

understanding of service-learning. Some studies identified numerous negative outcomes

in service-learning experiences. Critics have asserted that service-learning is deficient in

academic rigor and thus detracts from student learning, particularly concerning curricular

knowledge (Rocheleau, 2004). However, Henson and Sutliff (1998) reported,

"Integrating service learning into a regular class stimulates both teaching and learning (p.

201). Additionally, Terry and Bohnenberger (2007) claimed that educational outcomes

should not necessarily be the primary focus in evaluations of service-learning:

> If we are to believe developmental psychologists such as Piaget, Bandura,
> Kohlberg, and Gilligan, then development rather than achievement should
> be the aim of education….Service-learning is a marvelous method of
> learning as it deals with real-life experiences, something that is
> meaningful to the [student].

Thus, examinations of service-learning should focus on development as well as learning

based on practical experience.

Furthermore, service-learning may enhance traditional education. For instance, it

"places [students] in a context in which the learning is real, having consequences for both

themselves and others" (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2007, p. 8). Thus, knowledge transforms

from abstract ideas and theories to applicable information that impacts students and their communities.

Research has also identified other negative outcomes of service-learning that involve students' feelings toward their community and their perceived impact on the world. For instance, Koliba (1998) reported that students did not feel as if though they were part of the community. Additionally, Miller (1997) found that students felt a decreased sense of ability to make a difference in the world. However, Koliba (1998) partially attributed such results to the underuse of students and the lack of dialogue between students and community members. Likewise, Miller (1997) felt that his outcome was still positive due to the change in students' unrealistic expectations about their capacity to solve social problems.

Futhermore, several studies have reported that service-learning had positive effects on students. Astin and Sax (1998) noted, "Participating in service activities during the undergraduate years substantially enhances the students' academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility" (p. 262). Kromer and Hitch (1994) described four benefits students received from service-learning programs, including an increase of self-esteem; a sense of empowerment by participating in community service where they are needed, valued and respected; improved citizenship as a result of active engagement in community life; and a heightening of the student's desire to learn through their experience. Likewise, Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997) found that service-learning impacts students' "attitudes, values, skills, and the way they think about social issues even over the relatively brief period of a semester" (p. 13). However, they also cautioned that the results were significant by a small margin, and few service-learning experiences

had a substantial influence on students. However, such studies indicate that despite mixed findings, service-learning has the potential to contribute to students' educational experiences and lives.

Regardless of positive or negative findings, the studies on service-learning indicate that further empirical work is needed. This research should aim to determine the impact of service-learning on students' education, attitudes, and skills. Another goal should be to focus more on outcomes for the communities in which the students work, as this aspect is often given less empirical attention despite the importance of reciprocity in service-learning. Additionally, as several studies have found service-learning to be effective, future studies should attempt to determine the best methods for implementing service-learning experiences and meeting curricular and community goals.

Intergenerational Service-Learning

Intergenerational service-learning has increasingly gained attention as a potential way to improve intergenerational relations and fulfill the goals of service-learning by mutually benefiting students and communities. As Karasik (2007) noted:

> Gerontology and geriatrics, like other health and human service fields, are a natural fit for service-learning and similar forms of experiential education. As the population of older adults continues to grow, there is an increasing need for professionals in all areas and levels of aging services, including long-term care. The rapidly changing demographics also create service gaps that students can potentially fill as they develop their professional skills. Not surprisingly, more and more academic programs and community agencies are partnering to meet this growing need. (p. 285)

Thus, intergenerational service-learning is a promising way to improve the education of students in the field of aging and address the needs of an aging population.

The History of Intergenerational Service-Learning

The history of intergenerational service-learning is relatively brief. Considering the long tradition of education in society, service-learning is a fairly contemporary pedagogical development, and intergenerational service-learning is even more recent. According to Hegeman, Horowitz, Tepper, Pillemer, & Schultz (2002), The Foundation for Long Term Care (FLTC) developed several series of service-learning programs over a period of time, with support from external funders, including the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), the Federal Corporation on National and Community Service, and a private foundation. As a result of these efforts, "from 1980-2000, over 1200 students from 27 participating colleges worked with over 6000 elders" (Hegeman et al., 2002, p. 183).

In the past decade, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) and the University of Pittsburgh collaborated to establish an intergenerational service-learning program, and the Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas emulated a program similar to the FLTC's program. In addition to these established initiatives, intergenerational service-learning courses have been increasing in institutions of higher education across the nation.

The Goals of Intergenerational Service-Learning

One of the primary goals of intergenerational service-learning is to prepare gerontology students and students in related fields to address the needs and issues of an aging population. McCrea (2004) posits that gerontology faculty have two primary goals:

(1) to convey accurate information about America's older population; and

> (2) to provide students with opportunities for direct contact with older
> persons through a pedagogy that enables them to understand older
> adults' characteristics, diversity, needs, and value to our culture. (p. 7)

Although the first goal is easily obtainable due to the growing body of knowledge and

research on aging and older adults, the second goal is more challenging, as courses

typically use traditional teaching methods that involve little, if any, interaction with older

adults. Thus, intergenerational service-learning can assist faculty in achieving their goals

as educators and effectively teach students as well as foster personal and professional

growth.

In addition to educational goals, each service-learning course or experience may

have specific goals, which vary due to the diverse forms of intergenerational service-

learning. Broadly speaking, the aim of intergenerational service-learning is "to connect

older and younger generations in meaningful and productive interactions within a

community setting, at the same time benefiting elders and students and meeting

community needs (Dorfman, Murty, Ingram, & Evans, 2002, p. 220). Other goals of

service-learning might include improving attitudes toward aging, improving attitudes

toward other age groups, improving people's quality of life, exposing students to the

various aspects of aging, increasing students' professional experience with older adults,

and providing older adults with the opportunity to share their life experiences or teach

students through oral histories, interviews, or reminiscence activities.

Designing and Implementing Intergenerational Service-Learning

Successfully planning and executing intergenerational service-learning

experiences is complex, because as Karasik, Maddox, & Wallingford (2004) noted:

> Developing and implementing meaningful service-learning
> experiences...requires consideration of both of the discipline-specific
> content to be addressed, as well as the varied backgrounds (educational
> and personal) and levels (freshman to graduate) of the students who will
> be participating. Service-learning is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. (p. 1)

Thus, there are multiple factors to consider. McCrea (2004) identified five stages in organizing a course with intergenerational service-learning: preparation, action, reflection, recognition, and evaluation.

Preparation

Preparation involves identifying a need in the community that fits with course goals, typically through a community agency. Therefore, a community partnership must be established. When initiating this partnership, it is important that the community agency recognizes the purpose of service-learning and the goals that the student, staff, or faculty member is trying to achieve. If a mentor or faculty member is not available to supervise the students, the agency representatives must agree to assist in the educational experience. Correspondingly, the service-learning practitioner must understand the need that the service-learning experience will address, and the agency's expectations for the students. McCrea (2004) recommends creating a memorandum of understanding in order to clarify the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of all involved parties. It is also important to establish regular communication that involves providing feedback and tracking student progress.

Once a need is identified and a community partnerships is established, learning objectives must be established that reflect the goals of the course. Howard (2001) identified five learning objective categories: course-specific academic learning, referring to the knowledge and skills assigned to the particular course; generic academic learning,

referring to the knowledge and skills that are standard in most courses, such as critical thinking; learning how to learn, referring to helping students become active learners and integrating theory with practice; community learning, referring to learning about a particular population or issue that impacts a community; and inter- and intra-personal learning, referring to knowledge and skills related to personal values, emotional development, and engaging with other learners. It is important to consider these areas when determining the objectives for the service-learning course and experience.

Another important aspect of preparation is educating students about service-learning and working with older adults. This task can be accomplished through orientation and training sessions, which familiarize students with the concepts and goals of service-learning, teaches them about aging sensitivity, myths, and stereotypes, suggests communication strategies for interacting with older adults, and addresses any questions or fears they may have (McCrea, 2004). In some intergenerational service-learning experiences, it may be appropriate or even necessary to hold a similar briefing for the older adults who will be interacting with the students. A final issue that must be considered is engagement and disengagement. Students and older adults should be encouraged to develop relationships, but both parties should also be prepared to end the relationship (McCrea, 2004). Once all the necessary planning is finished, the service-learning experience may commence.

Action

Action describes the specific service-learning experience developed for the course. Intergenerational service-learning experiences vary significantly. As Shapiro and Hegeman (2002) noted, "While the majority of service learning in elder-care projects

involve friendly visiting or the development of group activities, service learning in elder care can be as diverse as the faculty and students make them" (p. 12). The type of service activity depends on numerous factors, including the course in which service-learning is implemented, the preferences of the person developing the experience, and the intended outcomes.

The location of the college or university may also impact the type of service-learning activity, as rural and urban areas have different needs. Additionally, service-learning experiences may either be a class activity, or there may be several different sites and activities from which students can choose, depending on their personal interests. Futhermore, intergenerational service-learning may be developed within numerous disciplines, including gerontology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, family studies, social work, allied health sciences, business, architecture, and history. Thus, service-learning practitioners are encouraged to be as creative as they wish, and modify activities according to the aforementioned factors. McCrea (2004) identified three general criteria for intergenerational service learning:

> (1) activities should address a real need in the community,

> (2) involve direct service to one or more older adults, and

> (3) be related to the course learning objectives. (p. 13)

There are numerous examples of intergenerational service-learning experiences, including friendly visiting; conducting oral histories; coordinating nutrition or health screening opportunities or health fairs; teaching computer skills, fall prevention, aerobics, or other classes for older adults; writing life-reviews; holding art, pet, or other recreational therapy sessions; leading creative storytelling for older adults with dementia;

developing activities or programming at senior centers or continuing care retirement

communities; arranging older adults to guest lecture in courses about history or personal

life experiences; developing classes in which older adults teach sewing, quilting, cooking,

or other specialized skills; furthering lifelong learning initiatives recruiting older adults to

sign up for more university courses; and volunteering with older adults in the community.

As these illustrations indicate, intergenerational service-learning experiences are diverse

and vary greatly, depending on the circumstances of the course.

Reflection

Reflection is an essential aspect of service-learning. As McCrea, Weisman, Stepp,

and Ciha (2004) noted, "Reflection in service-learning links classroom learning, readings,

and theory to the community service experiences of students, increasing their ability to

think critically about the nature and origins of community issues and ways to address

them" (p. 5). Like service-learning experiences, reflection may occur in various forms,

such as personal dialogues with the service-learning practitioner, group discussions,

journals or blogs, or written papers. According to Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede (1996),

reflection in service-learning:

‣ motivates students to learn;
‣ aids in personal development;
‣ helps students connect to others;
‣ helps develop a commitment to active citizenship;
‣ enhances understanding of issues and subject matter;
‣ helps students apply knowledge and skills from one setting to another; and
‣ helps them reframe the way they think about complex social issues. (as cited in McCrea, 2004, p. 16).

When choosing a method of communication for reflection, service-learning practitioners should consider multiple factors, including the learning objectives of the course, the learning styles of the students, and the workload of the course.

Recognition

After the service-learning experience is complete, it is appropriate to recognize the participants, as they are volunteers that were not paid for their contributions. In addition to thanking participants, recognition serves to "help bring closure and give participants an opportunity to say good-bye" (McCrea, 2004, p. 17). Recognition may occur in many forms, such as thank-you cards, small gifts or tokens of appreciation, certificates, or a recognition event.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the final step in implementing a service-learning experience. Evaluations examine the service-learning initiative on multiple outcomes, including the impact on students' learning and personal growth, the extent to which the community need was addressed, and the effectiveness of the overall service-learning process. Evaluations may include reflective final papers, interviews, written surveys, focus groups, or structured questionnaire, and pre-tests and post-tests are especially helpful in establishing measurable results (McCrea, 2004). It is important that evaluations include all participants, including students, older adults, and community partner representatives. In addition to determining the outcomes of the service-learning experiences, evaluations are also important for improving future intergenerational service-learning courses by replicating the successful characteristics and modifying the ineffective aspects.

The Impact of Intergenerational Service-Learning

Intergenerational service-learning is typically a successful initiative, with favorable outcomes for all involved parties. Empirical research has found that service-learning in gerontology courses results in numerous benefits for students. As Dorfman et al. (2002) noted:

> Virtually all researchers report positive outcomes among students who participate in intergenerational service-learning. These include development of more positive attitudes toward elders, understanding the history and culture of elders, enhancement of classroom learning, and increased self-awareness and acceptance of one's own aging. (p. 221)

Concerning attitudinal changes, numerous studies have been conducted that aim to improve intergenerational relationships by improving students' attitudes toward aging and older adults, which is one of the primary goals of service-learning. Nichols and Monard (1999) and Dorfman et al. (2002) indicated that after an intergenerational service-learning experience, students exhibited more positive attitudes toward older adults. Nichols and Monard (1999) also found that a greater number of students viewed older adults as healthy, productive, cooperative and happy and reported that they discovered that not all older people had negative personality traits. Several studies have also found that students were more likely to view the older population as more diverse and heterogenous after an intergenerational service-learning experience (Nichols & Monard, 1999; Watson, Church, Darville, & Darville, 1997). Other studies have also indicated that students who participate in intergenerational service-learning have more positive attitudes toward older adults than students who did not participate (Bringle & Kremer, 1993). Overall, studies indicate that intergenerational service-learning has the

potential to improve attitudes toward aging and members of the older population, and therefore improve intergenerational relationships in the process.

In addition to attitudinal changes, several other positive outcomes have been identified for students. Numerous studies have found that intergenerational service-learning experiences have an impact on students academically, emotionally, personally, and professionally. Concerning educational outcomes, McCrea and Smith (1997) claimed that students participating in intergenerational service-learning experienced enhanced classroom learning. Likewise, Natvig (2007) found that students reported various academic benefits, including enriched thought processes and improvements in creative problem solving. Additionally, the evaluation of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education and University of Pittsburgh's Intergenerational Service Learning Program indicated several important educational outcomes:

> 64 percent of faculty who participated believed that service-learning components increased student interest in course content, and all faculty reported that volunteer experiences complemented course work; 78 percent of 230 participating students reported that their service-learning experience contributed a great deal what what would have been in a traditional course. (as cited in Hegeman, Hororwitz, Tepper, Phillemer, & Schultz, 2002, p. 183).

Thus, intergenerational service-learning contributes to an enhanced educational experience and numerous academic benefits for students.

Service-learning experiences in gerontology also often have positive outcomes involving emotional and personal development. Natvig (2007) found that students who participated in intergenerational service-learning felt they were able to make a difference in the lives of older adults and have an impact on their communities, resulting in increased personal satisfaction. Additionally, as McCrea and Smith (1997) recognized,

students may develop a greater sense of social responsibility, a stronger commitment to service, and increased self-understanding after participating in service-learning. An additional important personal benefit involves students' understanding of the aging process. Several studies report that service-learning experiences resulted in students increasing their knowledge and understanding of the aging process, which decreased their fears about their own aging (Bringle & Kremer, 1993; McCrea & Smith, 1997; Nichols & Monard, 1999; Dorfman et al., 2002). Another important outcome that McCrea and Smith (1997) identified is improved interpersonal skills and the development of meaningful relationships with older adults. These outcomes indicate that intergenerational service-learning may enhance emotional and personal development in addition to providing academic benefits.

Intergenerational service-learning also has an impact on students' professional development. Service-learning experiences in gerontology often result in improved communication, interaction, and organizational skills (Natvig, 2007). Another important aspect of intergenerational service-learning is that is has positive outcomes for gerontology students preparing for a career in the field of aging as well as students from outside disciplines who are not necessarily planning to work with older adults. McCrea (2004) posited that intergenerational service-learning has the potential to expose gerontology students to older adults who differ in health and ability, which will help students learn about aging services and develop the skills required to work with older adults. He also proposed that service-learning helps students who only take one or two courses in gerontology by teaching them about the implications the growing population of older adults has on their particular academic discipline and future occupation. Another

important outcome is that intergenerational service-learning may influence students'

career plans and encourage them to pursue work in an aging-related field.

As the current body of empirical work indicates, intergenerational service-

learning often results in multiple positive outcomes for students, including academic,

emotional, personal, and professional development. As McCrea (2004) noted,

> Through...service-based contact with older adults, students better
> understand the philosophical and cultural similarities and differences
> between younger persons and older adults, and improve their ability to
> work with elders and to recognize their contributions to society while
> contributing to their basic and applied skills. (p. 7)

Thus, although further research is required to form a better understanding of

intergenerational service-learning, current findings indicate that it is successful and

effective.

In addition to benefiting students, service-learning initiatives have produced

positive outcomes for older participants. When evaluating the impact of a service-

learning experience on older adults, Greene (1998) found that 94% of elders claimed that

they benefited from the experience. A majority of respondents indicated that they valued

the companionship the students provided. Others also mentioned that they enjoyed

developing a new point of view through intergenerational interaction, meeting new

people, and having increased social interaction. Moreover, all senior participants agreed

that the idea of older people teaching younger people was valuable and worthwhile.

Likewise, Bringle and Kremer (1993) reported that older adults felt positively

about visits from university students, describing interactions as "satisfying," "close," and

"relaxing." Additionally, Herrmann, Herrmann, Stafford, and Herrmann (2005) noted that

older adults who had participated in intergenerational interaction had higher levels of

positive psychosocial change than older adults who had not. Other possible positive outcomes for older adults in service-learning experiences are increased self-esteem and social interaction, the opportunity to review and share life experiences, and the development of a meaningful relationship with someone (McCrea & Smith, 1997). As this research indicates, service-learning is often well received by older people and evaluations are overwhelmingly positive.

Intergenerational service-learning has a significant amount of empirical support, and demonstrates a strong potential to positively impact students and older adults. Such outcomes indicate that intergenerational service-learning achieves the goals of service-learning, particularly by meeting community needs, establishing mutually beneficial relationships, and enhancing participants' lives academically and personally. However, further research must be conducted to affirm the success of intergenerational service-learning, determine best practices, and identify areas that need improvement.

Issues in the Implementation and Practice of Intergenerational Service-Learning

Although intergenerational service-learning has stronger empirical support than traditional service-learning, many of the same challenges still apply in addition to issues unique to gerontology. Thus, even supporters of intergenerational service-learning recognize the barriers that may impede the successful development of courses that utilize service-learning.

One of the primary issues in implementing intergenerational service-learning in the study of gerontology is the viability and usefulness of service-learning in gerontology courses. For instance, although he posits that intergenerational service-learning fulfills the educational goals of faculty, McCrea (2004) noted that due to the current structure of

the educational system, which focuses on classroom learning rather than interactive and experiential methods, and a lack of information, knowledge, and resources, faculty may face several challenges when attempting to establish a service-learning course. Likewise, Bulot and Johnson (2007) noted that service-learning can also be costly to faculty. They stated that faculty consistently lamented that service-learning courses were time consuming and difficult to implement, and required more effort than traditional courses. Another issue faculty faced was incorporating the experiences into the classroom, and maintaining consensual understanding between the faculty and community partners.

Correspondingly, Dorfman et al. (2002) admitted that service-learning in gerontology is an issue due to constraints on students' time. When evaluating a service-learning experience, they noted that the only negative comments from students involved the heavy workload and time consuming nature of service-learning. Thus, despite the recognition that service-learning in gerontology has multiple benefits, it also has many obstacles and limitations.

Another significant issue in implementing intergenerational service-learning into gerontology courses involves the availability and accessibility of aging-related courses, and the impact of service components in such courses. Although many colleges and universities offer courses and programs on aging, Peterson, Wendt, and Douglas (1994) advocated for the development of more opportunities to learn about aging and older adults. They claimed that all universities should make an effort to raise students' awareness of aging and related issues through at least one course, and advised that colleges will have to work continuously and consciously to add gerontology courses.

Furthermore, some scholars claim that service-learning components are a potential way to reach more students and heighten the demand for gerontology courses at colleges and universities. Dorfman et al. (2002) posited that offering service-learning components in gerontology has increased student interest in the pursing careers in aging. Cummings, Galambos, and DeCoster (2003) concurred, noting that many students who have intergenerational experiences through coursework tend to work in gerontology-related fields after graduation, and express increased confidence in their skills and knowledge.

Brown and Roodin (2001), however, argued that there are many challenges students face when participating in intergenerational interaction that may actually impede their involvement and interest. Thus, time commitment, logistical issues, developing relationships with older adults, and reluctance because of previous negative experiences are all challenges to encouraging students to enroll in service-learning courses in gerontology.

Another issue in intergenerational service-learning involves using traditional service-learning methods or responding to the unique challenges of service-learning in gerontology. Kolb (1984) proposed that service-learning should be in a four-part series with separate stages. Stage 1 is concrete experiences, or direct interaction with others; Stage 2 involves observation and reflection of those experiences; Stage 3 consists of forming abstract concepts and generalizations; and Stage 4 is testing the implications of the lessons learned in new situations (i.e. field work at a community partner site).

However, Bulot and Johnson (2007) claimed that these stages are not applicable in gerontology, noting, "It was found that to begin with Stage 1…would have been a

failure with a population of relatively inexperienced undergraduate students who had little experience with gerontology" (p. 636). Rather, they recommended that faculty begin with basic information on aging and gerontological concepts before involving students in service-learning experiences. Thus, traditional service-learning theory may not be easily applied to intergenerational service-learning due to the distinctive elements of intergenerational service.

A related issue is the distinction between service-learning for advanced students versus service-learning for introductory students. Although it is generally agreed that intergenerational service-learning is a positive experience for advanced students in the study of aging, scholars dispute the value of incorporating service into introductory courses. McCrea (2004) claimed service-learning can be beneficial to all students. Furthermore, for many non-majors, a service-learning course may be the only experience they receive working with adults in later life, which impacts their view of aging and its relation to their field and future employment.

Other scholars, however, argue against service-learning initiatives in introductory classes. Strand (1999) argued that requiring community service in an undergraduate course does not necessarily positively impact students' learning. He noted that service may actually negate the goals of experiential learning "by subtly promoting asociological and individualistic thinking about society and human behavior, encouraging reliance on personal experience rather than systematic analysis as a basis for knowing, and reinforcing rather than challenging stereotypical views" (p. 32). Bulot and Johnson (2007) echoed this concern, claiming that the issue of ageism is particularly relevant to introductory courses, as the majority students in lower-level classes have never worked

with older adults and thus enter the field with clearly ageist attitudes and other deficiencies.

As these numerous issues indicate, intergenerational service-learning is still developing as a pedagogy, and attempting to integrate gerontology and the philosophies of service-learning are clear and straightforward in some ways, but challenging in others. However, these issues may be addressed in various ways. First, further empirical research is required to determine the best and most effective practices for intergenerational service-learning.

Additionally, more resources and training opportunities should be developed that teach faculty to effectively use service-learning in their courses, as well as appropriately prepare introductory and advanced students for serving the older population. Also, service-learning practitioners should collaborate with service-learning centers on campuses and community agencies to streamline and maintain communication. Another important issue that all involved parties can address is determining the most effective ways to prepare students for entering their service site with competency and the proper attitudes.

Students, staff, or faculty implementing service-learning courses must also seek innovative methods to design courses that reflect the goals of service-learning, rather than adhering to the typical standards of traditional education. For instance, faculty must consider ways to lessen the academic workload to account for the increased time commitment service work requires, but without compromising the academic rigor. One possible solution is to use the service experiences as an additional "text," which students must integrate with concepts learned in class.

Improving Intergenerational Relations Through Service-Learning

Intergenerational service-learning is promising as a contact intervention and as a pedagogical approach. The current body of empirical research has indicated that it is significantly effective in numerous ways, including improving students' attitudes toward aging and older adults, fostering students' academic, emotional, and professional development, increasing students' sense of civic engagement and social responsibility, and contributing to older adults' quality of life.

CHAPTER SIX
Implementing an Intergenerational Service-Learning Experience

The purpose of this pilot study was to explore the impact of intergenerational interaction on university students' attitudes toward aging and other generations, as well as examine the influence of intergenerational interaction on students' experience in a gerontology course. The study also intended to investigate the impact of intergenerational interaction on the residents in the assisted living section of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC).

Methods

Recruitment and Selection of Subjects

The intergenerational interaction was designed and implemented in conjunction with the introductory gerontology course "Aging in American Society" as a service-learning component. The service work entailed students attending four volunteer sessions at an assisted living facility in a local CCRC and visiting with residents. The experience was presented as an "alternate" assignment (See Appendix B). Due to the amount of time involved, the students who participated were given the option of replacing their lowest test score in the course with criteria based on attendance and participation in the volunteer sessions and completing pre and post-experience surveys and reflective interviews.

Recruitment of students was on a volunteer basis. Students were asked to submit an interest form if they wished to participate (See Appendix C). Although 34 students indicated interest, only eight people were randomly selected in a lottery due to logistical limitations. Of those eight people, six students elected to participate. The two students

who did not participate had time conflicts that prevented them from attending all the volunteer sessions. The six students were all Caucasian, and there were three males and three females. Ages ranged from 18 to 22.

Recruitment of older adults was through the activities department in a CCRC. Residents in assisted living were given the opportunity to participate on a voluntary basis. Residents were not required to attend all sessions, but rather could choose when to participate. Approximately fourteen older adults participated, and attendance at each session ranged from six to twelve residents. The residents were all Caucasian, and there were twelve females and two males. All residents were over 60 years old, and a majority were between 82 and 97 years old. Five residents also elected to participate in an interview about the experience. Each respondent was female, Caucasian, and between the ages of 88 and 97 years old.

Location

The students' pre and post-evaluations occurred in a private office setting, and the older adults' interviews occurred in their private apartments. The intergenerational group activities took place in the assisted living section of the CCRC, either in the dining room, the living room, or individual residents' rooms.

Intergenerational Interaction Sessions

The students were required to attend an orientation session and tour before participating. Through the course, they were also informed about relevant topics such as stereotypes and ageism. Students volunteered once a week for four weeks. Each session lasted approximately one hour. Volunteers visited with assisted living residents and

participated in discussion. The sessions varied between one-on-one and group

interactions, depending on the number of older adults and the location of the visit.

Discussion questions were designed to develop relationships between students and

residents, as well as to reflect course content and current issues concerning aging (See

Appendix D). Although they were provided with questions at each session, they were

presented as suggestions only. Students and residents were not required to follow a

specific interview script, but rather encouraged to speak about their lives and experiences

growing older in American society.

Data Collection

Students were given pre-experience and post-experience evaluations. Pre-

evaluations consisted of demographic information (See Appendix E), and surveys

that assessed the participant's attitudes toward aging and other age groups. The first

survey was the Attitudes to Aging Questionnaire (AAQ), which is a 24-item cross-

cultural questionnaire based on a lifespan developmental approach. The survey

consists of a three-factor model comprised of psychosocial loss, physical change,

and psychological growth (Laidlaw, Power, & Schmidt, 2006). The AAQ uses a

five-point Likert scale to assess attitudes based on general and personal statements

about the aging process (See Appendix F). The second survey was Polizzi's Refined

Version of the Aging Semantic Differential (Polizzi, 2003). Responses were on a

seven-point scale of polar opposite traits, and measured perceived characteristics of

older women and men (See Appendix G). The pre-evaluations also consisted of an

interview portion, in which students were asked a variety of questions about aging

and related topics such as age segregation versus integration (See Appendix H). For

the post-evaluations, the surveys were re-administered. Another interview was conducted to assess the students' experiences and their feelings and thoughts about the service-learning experience (See Appendix H). Due to the voluntary nature of the sessions, the residents were not given pre-test evaluations, but were interviewed after the sessions ended to evaluate the impact of the intergenerational interaction experience, as well as their attitudes toward younger generations and aging (See Appendix I).

Results

Quantitative Data

The pre/post-test design of the surveys and their content was used to determine if the service-learning experience had impacted the students' attitudes toward aging and older adults. Analysis of the AAQ included summative scores of the categories and overall scores. Analysis of Polizzi's Refined Version of the Aging Semantic Differential included summative scores for perceived characteristics of men and summative scores for perceived characteristics of women. The data only examined within-group change from pre-test to post-test, and was analyzed using matched pairs t-tests.

The students showed no significant changes in their attitudes toward aging. The AAQ scores evaluating attitudes toward psychosocial loss, physical change, and psychological growth were arranged on a scale of 1 – 5, and then the average was calculated, with a score of 1 indicating a positive response and a score of 5 indicating a negative response (See Table 1).

Table 1. Average Changes in Students' Attitudes Toward Aging		
	Pre-Test	**Post-Test**
Psychosocial Loss	2.4	2.77
Physical Change	2.125	2.35
Psychological Growth	2.29	2.19

The differences in the scores, through marginal, suggest that after the service-learning experience, the students had more negative attitudes about aging concerning psychosocial loss and physical change, and more positive attitudes about aging concerning psychological growth.

Examining the individual students' pre-tests and post-tests revealed some interesting general trends (See Table 2 and Appendix J).

Table 2. Individual Changes in Students' Attitudes Toward Aging								
	Psychosocial Loss		**Physical Change**		**Psychological Growth**		**Total**	
Student	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	3.25	3	1.875	2.25	2.5	2	2.542	2.417
2	2.25	2.875	2	2.75	2.875	3	2.375	2.875
3	2.125	2.5	2.125	2.625	2.25	2	2.167	2.375
4	2.75	3.125	2.5	3	2	2.125	2.417	2.75
5	2	1.875	1.5	1.25	2.25	1.75	1.917	1.625
6	2	3.25	2.75	2.25	1.875	2.25	2.302	2.583

First, some students had lower averages on the post-tests in some or all of the categories and overall, indicating more positive attitudes toward aging after the service-learning experience. Student 1's attitudinal scores were lower in the post-test for all three categories (psychosocial loss, physical change, and psychological growth) and overall.

Student 5's attitudinal scores were lower in two of the three categories (psychosocial loss and psychological growth) and overall. Student 3 also showed a decreased score, but only in the psychosocial growth category. For the four students (2, 3, 4, and 6) who did not exhibit an overall decrease in average scores, their scores increased on the post-tests for all three categories and overall, indicating more negative attitudes toward aging after the service-learning experience.

The students also exhibited no significant differences in their pre/post-test perceptions of older women and men using Polizzi's Refined Version of the Aging Semantic Differential. The scores were evaluated based on the averages of 24 traits, rated on a scale of 1 – 7, with a score of 1 indicating a positive trait association (i.e. cheerful) and a score of 7 indicating a negative trait association (i.e. crabby). Examining the individual scores revealed that a majority of students (2, 4, 5, and 6) had higher averages on the post-tests in both categories, and overall. The other students (1 and 3) exhibited lower scales on the post-tests in both categories and overall (See Table 3).

Table 3. Individual Changes in Students' Perceptions of Older Women and Men						
	Women		Men		Total	
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	3.29	2.71	3.21	3	3.25	2.855
2	1.96	3.25	3.042	4	2.501	3.625
3	3.42	1.375	3.42	1.58	2.398	1.478
4	3.167	3.375	3.5	3.71	3.334	3.543
5	1.5	2.042	1.542	2.208	1.521	2.125
6	2.63	3.83	2.46	4.04	2.545	3.935

For women, the average pre-test score was 2.66 and the average post-test score was 2.76.

For men, the average pre-test score was 2.86 and the average post-test score was 3.09.

For men and women combined, the average pre-test score was 2.76 and the average post-test score was 2.925 (See Table 4).

Table 4. Average Changes in Student Perceptions of Older Women and Men		
	Pre-Test	**Post-Test**
Women	2.66	2.76
Men	2.86	3.09
Total	2.76	2.925

Though these differences are marginal, the general trend showed increased scores, suggesting more negative perceptions of older men and women after the intergenerational service-learning experience (See Appendix K). Interestingly, while the pre-test scores for men and the pre-test scores for women were insignificant, the post-test for men and the post-test for women were significantly different, indicating that the students had perceived older men and women as characteristically similar in the pre-evaluation, but viewed them as characteristically different after the experience.

Qualitative Data

The students' responses to the pre/post-test open-ended reflective interview questions were transcribed and then the students' pre-test answers were compared to their post-test answers to determine if there was any change in their attitudes toward aging, their attitudes toward older adults, and their feelings about having relationships with older generations. Their post-test responses were also analyzed to identify major themes and trends; in particular, if they felt the service-learning interaction impacted their

experience in the introductory gerontology course and their overall education, and if they would recommend that the gerontology courses implement similar service-learning experiences in the future. The assisted living residents' responses were also transcribed and evaluated to determine how they felt about the intergenerational interaction and if they believed it should be continued in the future.

Impact of Intergenerational Service-Learning on Students

The qualitative data collected from the students is valuable because it provides a more in-depth understanding of the students' service-learning experience as well as potentially offers further insight into the quantitative results. The students had the opportunity to describe their observations, thoughts, and feelings in their own words through a reflective dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee that incorporated open-ended questions and freely allowed the discussion to go in various directions, depending on the students' responses.

All of the students felt that they had learned from the experience. The following statements are illustrative:

> *"I learned that older people are a lot different, like they're just like us –*
> *they're all different. And I think that before I went there I thought maybe*
> *that they were all sort of the same."*

> *"I've learned a lot. I…learned that I actually enjoy being around older*
> *adults. I have a whole new perspective after taking that class and going to*
> *the [CCRC]. They're actually really open to take to you about their*
> *experiences."*

> *"I got a greater appreciation for older adults and what they can*
> *contribute to society. I already had respect for them, but now I have an*
> *even greater respect for them and the things they've gone through, and*
> *greater respect for why they should be here and why we should have*
> *things like health care to take care of them."*

> *"I learned how appreciative the people at the [CCRC] were, and I learned that there's a lot to learn from old people, which I knew anyhow but to actually get to experience it made a difference."*

> *"I think the most important thing I learned is that aging depends on the person. Because some people age differently than others. Some individuals are optimistic, and some of them are…pessimistic."*

Additionally, all the students stated that the service-learning experience enhanced what they learned in class, albeit in varying degrees. Some students felt that it impacted the class in a general sense and broadened their frame of reference about older adults, whereas other students mentioned applying specific course concepts, such as stereotypes and ageism, to the experience:

> *"I don't think it directly went off something we learned in class, but…gave perspective on what things are like, 50 years from now."*

> *"It allowed me to see if firsthand rather than read it in a textbook or article."*

> *"It's always helpful when you can apply concepts in class to different real life experiences."*

> *"What I learned in class, I was actually thinking about while I was talking to people and the stuff that I had never really thought about…like the stereotypes and things like that, it just helped me broaden my view of older adults, because before it was just sort of just 'this is what an old person is,' and now it's…more developed."*

> *"Ageism, we learned about at the beginning and it…takes us through as the whole course goes, and I definitely noticed. They would say things about how, because they're old, they can't do things anymore and a lot of it was because they think society doesn't think they should be able to."*

Furthermore, all of the students believed that the intergenerational interaction had a positive impact on their education, and in some cases, students claimed it also influenced their future plans regarding programs of study and careers:

> *"I think it has impacted [my education] positively because…it makes you feel good to help volunteer and taking a gerontology class, it definitely*

puts into perspective everything we talk about because then you have…faces to associate with and people right in our community to associate all the problems and good and bad that go with aging."

"It was definitely a positive impact on my education. It…gave me real life experience with the field of gerontology outside of listening to lecture and doing group activities."

"I would consider it positive because…seeing them, and seeing how much it meant to them that we came and how happy it made them…it just really made me think that I could make a difference."

"It gave me a whole new outlook…I was thinking about doing occupational therapy for adolescents and actually I'm leaning more toward…older people."

"Definitely positive. There was a lot of things I learned from them. Not just about aging, but like their personal lives and what things were like in the '40s and '50s."

"It impacted my education…it gave me a better understanding of the theories we were learning about in gerontology and maybe a career I want to deal with or further my studies in gerontology."

The experience changed students' views of older adults. First, it exposed them to a variety of older people, whereas previous to the service work, many students admitted basing their conceptions of older people off their grandparents:

"I feel like aging in general, like older aging, all I really have to view it...is my grandparents. I only have two, and I feel like they're my only – like in answering...questions – they're not my only, but they're the most prominent older people in my life."

"Because the only [older] person I interact with these days is my paternal grandmother."

"When I think of the elderly generation, I think of my grandparents right off the bat and I think I compare them to everyone else in that generation."

Additionally, before the service-learning experience, several of the students' conceptions of elders were either simplistic or demonstrated compassionate stereotypes:

"Very wise. And…pretty generous. Like my grandparents."

"I feel like I want to help them, like if I saw someone struggling, I would want to help them. But I think for the most part, they're happy. They seem happy."

"I think that they are pretty wise. They seem pretty rational...I see them as happy and content for the most part."

After the service-learning experience, however, the students' attitudes were much more

positive or balanced and complex than before:

"I guess before, this is kind of stereotypical, [but] you think of them as being 'elderly' and after being there you realize that they're still just people. They have a lot of personality. I guess you just think of them in a stereotypical way, as being grandmothers and mothers, like there's nothing more to their lives, but there is. They're all different."

"I see them as individuals now and see how different they all are from each other, and…it just helped me realize that they were smart, and they could actually have a conversation and were social...it was just a new perspective."

"It changed...kind of for the positive and negative...it definitely gave me more examples, personal experience examples, as to what it's like to age because before that, I didn't interact with older people at all because I only have one grandparent left and I don't see her when I'm [at school] so it was...a very good experience."

Some students expressed that the experience did not change their views, but rather

fortified them:

"I don't think it changed my view, I think it's reinforced it...It just reinforced the fact that they have so much to offer, but not many people take advantage of it."

"I don't really think it changed my view that much. I already always had a pretty positive view of older adults and I think this just reinforced it."

Similar to their views of older adults, the students' attitudes toward aging also changed.

Before the experience, students had either negative views of aging or romanticized aging:

"I would like to have a better outlook on it, but at this point in my life, I'd have to say I'm not particularly looking forward to it. [I fear] the while independence issue...I don't' know what it's going to be like."

"I think...the older you get, the more wisdom you get."

"I don't see aging as a bad thing - I think wisdom comes with age, and you get to pass down your experiences to younger people."

Afterwards, however, the students were more positive or objective after completing the

service, as the following statements demonstrate:

"I don't want to say I thought negatively of growing old, but I...just figured growing old meant having grandchildren, and there's actually a lot more that you can do than just worry about the deaths of loved ones and your family. You still develop relationships, even in old age."

"It makes me look forward to...going through all the experiences that they went through...it makes me excited to hopefully get the chance to live through it all. And have these experiences that I'll be able to share with younger people."

"It gave...some perspective of what to look forward to...kind of a long way off from 70 or 80 years old, but it definitely showed me what it's going to be like at some point, and what my parents will be going through soon."

"I feel kind of neutral about aging. Before I thought...of it as...more negative, but depending on how you want to look at it personally, it can be negative or positive, just like any stage in life....so I think of it just a little more positive, or neutral. Like balanced."

Additionally, while the students expressed either a more positive or objective view of

aging after the experience, several of them expressed surprise at some older adults'

negative attitudes toward aging.

"I learned that older people have a more negative outlook on aging than I expected and I was pretty surprised about that. It's almost like I thought as people aged, they got to interact with younger people and pass their wisdom down, and I didn't really take into account all the negative aspects that they were bringing up about aging and all the stuff they are unable to do and all the socializing with younger students...they are missing out on stuff."

> *"They were kind of ageist against themselves...I learned that they don't like getting old at all, most of them are pretty negative about it."*

After further reflection, the students indicated that they felt the residents' negative feelings were not entirely due to the aging process, but rather their location in an assisted living facility and their decreasing sense of independence. They also noted that the residents did acknowledge more positive aspects of aging. They claimed:

> *"[It's about] where they are. It's holding them back...Going into it, I thought...how lucky are you to live to be 90? It's amazing. But then, at the age of 90, they think, what am I here for? I can't do anything. But on the other hand, there were some people that were writing stories about their lives and family comes all the time to see them, and they keep their brain thinking."*

> *"I think it means we need to adapt...they were complaining about the physical aspects of aging, which they obviously can't do too much about and then they were also complaining about disengagement…[But] they definitely had some positive feedback, like watching their children grow up was pretty high on most of their lists, and all the travels and stuff they've experienced too."*

The students were also asked to evaluate how connected they felt to other generations before and after the service-learning experience, and if they felt friendships between different generations should be promoted. Many of the students felt more connected to older generations after volunteering at the CCRC:

> *"I feel more connected that I did before. I enjoyed talking with them a lot, they had a lot of interesting things to say, and a lot of experiences to share and something like - the one guy and experience with World War II and my grandpa was also in it, so we had stuff to talk about there."*

> *"I feel more, I think, more connected just because – especially, all those people mostly went to [the same university], or related to the college thing. [They] were asking what classes I'm taking, they could...have good conversation with me about something that I knew and something that they knew and they remembered it, and I felt actually sort of connected to them just because…they knew about [the university] and…they knew stuff that I know. It was easy to talk with them."*

"I think I feel less disconnect from them than before. I've worked with older people in the past, and it just seemed it was a lot easier to do it at this facility, maybe just because of the group setting or the fact that we had common bond to [the university]. That was a big talking point, or icebreaker."

"I think I feel more connected. Going into it, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. Like I didn't make the habit of interacting with older people, but...actually talking to them, is...more eye opening and it's really easy to talk to older people now that I've had experience."

The students also claimed that friendships between different generations should be

encouraged and supported, as the following statements illustrate:

"There should be relationships with older adults because...from a younger person's standpoint, there's lots of things that we can learn from them and a lot of experiences they can share with us."

"I think we should promote friendships between different generations because I think you can learn form one generation to the next. I mean, why have history books if you are not going to learn from generation to generation?"

"I think we should promote friendship or interaction because...it teaches socialization skills that can be applied in so may different life situations, even if you're not always interacting with a different generation. And it's just helpful for both the older generation to interact with younger people...because they are excited to hear stories about our lives and...live through that...and help them think of fond memories. And it teaches younger people to appreciate life more, not taking everything for granted and to hear older people's experiences can provide insight on the path that you're on."

Some students believed that disconnect will most likely always exist, but that interaction

is still possible and important:

"I think there will always be disconnect just because of the different time periods we've grown up in. But there's still stuff we can connect upon, usually [college] and living in Ohio, and other stuff like that. I thought it was interesting to know they are playing Wii (a popular video game) now."

"I think there's always going to be a disconnect, just because of the age difference...it's harder to interact with someone that's like four times your age than someone your age, but I think it's valuable to be able to."

Lastly, the students were asked if they would recommend a similar service-learning experience to other students, and if they felt it should be incorporated into other introductory gerontology courses. Every student responded affirmatively, as the following statements demonstrate:

" [I would] definitely [recommend it]. I think it's just an eye opener and it was great to be able to step out of the college realm and just interact with people who live life, not in college, not as your parents, not as adults working, just people who already did all that, and hear what they have to say and advice they have to give. [And it] makes you feel good, it made me feel like I was making a difference, making their weeks [better] and I was happy to do it, happy to go every week...You can apply what's happening in gerontology to how they're living."

"It was only an hour a week...it wasn't a big commitment or anything, and it was enjoyable talking with the people [and] any time you have a chance to learn something or broaden your horizons, you definitely should."

"I would [recommend it]...because I think it actually made a difference to them...it was so cool to see them...so happy because we wanted to come."

"Yes, I would [recommend it]...You don't expect how much you are going to learn until you're actually there...I think it should be a requirement...In order to learn more about gerontology you should be able to go and interact with older adults...a textbook can only tell you so much, and a professor can only tell you so much. You have to experience it yourself."

"I would recommend it, just because not many people our age...especially here, at [college], interact with older people at all. And...I don't think there's any drawback to it. I think it would add to your understanding of...not only life, but just growing older...I think it should be incorporated into most [or] all gerontology courses, because...it's pertinent to the subject matter and you can't really understand what you're learning until you actually go out and see it firsthand."

"I would recommend it to other students just because it gives them a first hand view of...aging, and...it's a great opportunity [to] gain a lot of personal experience...to further their education."

The students also suggested other disciplines that might benefit from intergenerational service-learning, including courses in family studies, social work, business, psychology, and medical studies.

Impact of Intergenerational Service-Learning on Residents

Although pre-experience evaluations were not administered to the residents, interviews were conducted to determine the residents' perceptions of the students' visits. Every resident interviewed enjoyed the student visits, as the following statements illustrate:

> *"[I enjoyed the visits] very much. I liked the idea…I liked their youth…I just like them because they're young and they're the present age."*

> *"They were forth giving and they kept the conversation going. [I like to listen to them talk about] their lives."*

> *"Yes, I did [enjoy the visits]. Because [the students] are a breath of fresh air. And it's nice to know what the current young woman is thinking and going through."*

> *"[I liked] the camaraderie with the kids."*

Several of the residents also expressed that they appreciated the student visits because they interact primarily with older people at the CCRC:

> *"It's fun to be around young people when you're surrounded by old."*

> *"I think it's just a joy to see younger people and have younger people come to talk and remind you of your youth and how different it is or was. Oh, I think having younger people come in is a treat! Everybody's oldster out here."*

The residents varied in their opinions about receiving a satisfactory amount of interaction with younger people. Some people felt that they currently had adequate opportunities for connecting with younger people:

"My life has gotten so circumspect, I think I have enough – I can't take too much…I don't have a stamina, although I love young people and I love being around children of my friends and grandchildren of my friends. [I love] their youthfulness and enthusiasm."

"Yes, I think I have a pretty good combination of [interaction with] my grandchildren and their friends."

When other residents were asked if they felt the received a satisfactory amount of interaction, they felt that they did, but would like more:

"[It's] never enough!"

"I just love young people…I like to know what's happening to them, and how they feel, and hoping they're doing well, and trying to live a purposeful life."

Quite a few residents also expressed that they felt they were able to contribute to the students' lives:

"There are younger people who need older people too…older people [can offer] support…and encouragement."

"[Older people can contribute] a little broader perspective."

"I think it's good for young kids to get to know older people. You have some idea of what's going to happen to you."

Many residents also felt the students impacted their lives in a positive way, as the following statements illustrate:

"Some seem awfully interested in your past, first that you've lived so long and they seem to want to know more about your college experiences because they're certainly different…I think it's always helpful [to talk about your life], that's just human nature. If they're interested, and so many students seem to be interested in how you got through college."

"Well, I think they're just delightful people. I think it's wonderful that you even wanted to come and see us."

"[The visits] help pass the time. Gave me something of interest. It's always interesting to meet young kids…it helps keep your mind going.

> *You think about other things rather than what can I get into here or what*
> *can I do now. Helps make the time go, in a nice way."*

The residents also believed intergenerational relationships should be encouraged, despite

the current disconnect between generations:

> *"I think [intergenerational friendships are] wonderful, and there's some*
> *wonderful friendships that have grown that way."*

> *"I certainly don't think there should be a disconnect."*

> *"I think there's a natural disconnect, [but] if there isn't, I think older*
> *people would appreciate it."*

Despite their positive feedback, the residents still had several suggestions to improve the

intergenerational interactions. Several of them said they would have liked more

notification or preparation for the visits, and others felt that the students should receive

more training on how to talk to older adults and feel comfortable expressing themselves

freely. They also maintained that it was important that the visits remain structured and

scheduled, and recommended that they continue to be only once a week or even other

week due to people's busy schedules. Every resident suggested continuing the student

visits in the future:

> *"I hope they keep coming. It sure helps pass the time. I think it's a great*
> *help to us to be with young people."*

> *"Absolutely continue…it had a very positive impact on me."*

> *"I think [the university] is trying, or the [CCRC] is trying to have a nice*
> *rapport with [the university], which is very fine and is good for both of us*
> *– good for the university and good for the [CCRC]."*

> *"Yes…I think it adds a little bit when you're closeted in a single age*
> *group for so long, and your parents are somehow in another sphere, it*
> *can help to break through some of the clouds."*

> *"I have to say that I would enjoy this kind of thing."*

Many of the residents were also interested in finding out if the students benefited from the visits and viewed them as worthwhile and important. They were pleased by the students' positive feedback, and felt it reaffirmed their belief that the visits should continue.

Discussion and Implications

The findings of this pilot study support previous research on the value and importance of intergenerational service-learning, as the quantitative and qualitative results revealed that the intergenerational service-learning experience was positive for the students and the assisted living residents. In addition to the data confirming previous research, the quantitative and qualitative findings also demonstrated that the intergenerational service-learning experience was successful in fulfilling the goals of intergenerational contact interventions and service-learning.

Concerning the goals of intergenerational contact interventions, analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the students' demonstrated more developed views of aging and older generations after the service-learning experience. When examining the quantitative data, the changes between the pre/post-test results initially indicated that the service-learning experience had an adverse impact on the attitudes of the students, as the increasing averages on the post-tests of the AAQ and Polizzi's Refined Version of the Aging Semantic Differential suggested that the students developed more negative attitudes. However, further exploration of the data revealed that only examining the differences between the pre/post-test results resulted in an underdeveloped understanding of the students' attitudes after the intergenerational

interaction. For instance, regardless of the pre/post-test differences, the students' scores remained relatively low on each scale, which demonstrated positive attitudes toward aging and older adults overall.

Additionally, the students' initial scores were high, which may have been a result of romanticizing older adults or holding positive stereotypes. Furthermore, their attitudinal scales increased only minimally, causing the averages to be closer to 3 on the AAQ scale and 4 on the Polizzi's Refined Version of the Aging Semantic Differential scale, which would indicate neutrality. None of the students' responses were higher than 4, implying that they still held positive views and also developed a more balanced attitude toward aging. This supposition was strongly supported by the qualitative data from the reflective interviews, as a majority of the students indicated that the service-learning experience had given them a more objective or neutral attitude toward aging.

In terms of improving intergenerational relations, the students demonstrating more balanced views of aging and older adults and more positive feelings toward intergenerational relationships are promising outcomes. One of the purposes of gerontology is to foster "a balanced view of the limitations, potentials, and challenges of a long life" (Kastenbaum, 2006, p. 461). Moreover, Nussbaum and Williams (2001) propose that contact interventions should not necessarily focus on counteracting negative attitudes toward aging as they traditionally have, but rather attempt to support the development of objective or unbiased attitudes. As Hewstone and Brown (1986) claimed, contact "should have the dual aim of emphasizing typicality and creating a less monolithic, more differentiated view of [members of other groups]" (p. 29). Thus, according to this perspective, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that

intergenerational service-learning experiences are effective and valuable as contact interventions.

As a service-learning experience, the intergenerational interaction was intended to meet the pedagogical criteria of service-learning. For instance, the students were provided with opportunities for reflection through discussions with the interviewer before and after the interaction sessions. Additionally, the students experienced positive learning outcomes, as all the student participants reported that their involvement in intergenerational service-learning constructively impacted their education and their understanding of older adults. Furthermore, the students found the intergenerational interaction applicable and meaningful in the context of the gerontology coursework.

Likewise, the qualitative data from the interviews with the CCRC residents showed that the intergenerational service-learning experience had a positive impact on the older participants. The residents expressed that they enjoyed the student visits, and hoped that they would continue in the future. Additionally, like the students, the residents felt that the younger and older participants contributed to each other's lives and expressed that intergenerational relationships were important and should be encouraged. This positive feedback from the younger and older participants indicated that the interaction was mutually beneficial.

Yet another important finding is the students' perceptions of service and their role in their communities. Several of the students felt that they were making a difference in the lives of the older residents, and expressed positive feelings about forming relationships with older adults. Thus, this pilot study was also successful in meeting the goals of service-learning.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study was the small number of participants, in the group of students and in the group of assisted living residents. Another limitation was the brief time frame of the study. The students and residents only interacted during four brief sessions over the period of a month, and it would have been ideal for the sessions to last throughout the entire course.

Furthermore, the study did not evaluate the residents before the experience. Originally, the methodology did include a pre-test survey and interview for the residents, as one of the criticisms of intergenerational service-learning is that it often only examines outcomes for students. As a result, collecting data from both the students and older adults was the primary reason the AAQ was chosen, as it is one of the few questionnaires that uses a lifespan approach and thus is applicable to older adults. However, as they were voluntary sessions, none of the residents were able to indicate if they would participate in the student visits beforehand. Many claimed that their participation would depend on the day, their schedules, and how they were feeling. One way to overcome this issue was to interview every assisted living resident; however, this was not plausible due to time constraints. This limitation led to another issue in the assessment of the students. If the study had not intended to pre-test the older participants, there are questionnaires that are designed specifically to assess younger people's views of aging that would have most likely been more useful.

Yet another limitation was that the study only examined the outcomes for participants, and did not examine the students or residents who were not involved in the

intergenerational interaction. Lastly, because the service-learning experience was implemented in an existing course by a undergraduate teaching assistant, the interaction was not incorporated into the class as extensively as it could have been, and was not used as a reference in class work or discussion. Furthermore, while the interviews were intended to be discussions and encourage reflection, assignments such as journals or blogs would have been beneficial. Despite these limitations, this study contributed to the current understanding of intergenerational service-learning.

CONCLUSION

The United States must prepare for the rapid aging of the population and the many changes it will require. Numerous cultural and intuitional aspects of society should be considered, and adaptations must be made to account for the imminent and dramatic growth of the older population. While addressing issues in housing, transportation, health care, old-age entitlements, employment and retirement are essential, society must not focus solely on the potential problems of an aging society, but rather seek ways to utilize the older population and maximize their potential.

Intergenerational relationships may result in numerous positive outcomes, for individuals and communities. Fostering interaction between people from different age groups in education, work, or service settings and encouraging intergenerational friendships will fulfill needed roles in society, as well as provide individuals with physical, social, and psychological benefits. However, intergenerational relationships are currently difficult to establish and maintain. Negative attitudes toward aging are pervasive in society, and challenges such as age segregation, ageism, and generational conflict are increasingly present.

 One of the most plausible and effective ways of encouraging intergenerational interaction, dispelling stereotypes, and closing generational divides is through contact interventions, or intergenerational programming. Intergenerational contact interventions seek to create meaningful exchanges between younger and older generations that provide participants with increased awareness and knowledge about members of other age groups. Although there are various types of contact interventions, one of most promising forms is intergenerational service-learning. Intergenerational service-learning combines

the values and goals of intergenerational programming with the pedagogy of service-learning in order to promote learning in addition to increased knowledge and understanding. As a result, intergenerational service-learning can potentially improve intergenerational relations while resulting in other positive outcomes, such as promoting meaningful learning experiences and meeting community needs.

By implementing a service-learning experience in an introductory gerontology course, this project explored intergenerational service-learning as a potential way to address current issues involving intergenerational relationships. It found positive outcomes for the younger and older adult participants. Students exhibited more positive or balanced views of aging and older adults, and felt that the experience contributed to their education. Residents in an assisted living community expressed that the experience contributed to their lives, and enjoyed the interactions with the students. While the study had several significant limitations, it provided numerous significant suggestions for future service-learning initiatives.

Suggestions for Future Intergenerational Service-Learning

The limitations of of this study are common to many empirical investigations of intergenerational service-learning. Thus, future studies should attempt to address these issues. They should include more younger and older participants in order to strengthen the value of the results. The length of the service experience should also be extended, and last the duration of the course. Additionally, service-learning components should be studied for an extended period of time. Ideally, service-learning projects should be continued every semester and data should be collected on multiple cohorts of students and older adults. The experience should also be a more significant aspect of the course in

order to have a greater educational impact, and more opportunities for reflection should be offered to maximize learning outcomes.

Beyond addressing these limitations, this study provided insight into effectively designing and implementing intergenerational service-learning components in future courses in gerontology or related disciplines. For instance, it is clear that service-learning practitioners must take into account the academic level and experience of the students participating in service activities. It is essential that the contact intervention reflects the unique needs of students, and considers their academic level and experience with older adults or community service.

It is important to plan cautiously when incorporating service into an introductory course, as a negative experience could reinforce antagonistic stereotypes and negative attitudes toward aging. Different types of intergenerational interactions will produce diverse outcomes, which much be considered when planning a service-learning experience. For instance, in this particular study, assisted living residents were chosen in part due to their higher level of cognitive functioning, as it most likely would have been difficult for introductory students to handle interacting with older adults with dementia without prior experience or more extensive training. It is also interesting to contemplate how the outcomes might have been different if the students had interacted with independent living residents or community dwelling older adults outside of the institutional setting.

Another key finding is that the results revealed the importance of students, particularly introductory students, interacting with multiple older adults. If the students had been paired with one resident for all four sessions, they may not have realized how

diverse older people are or that the aging process is different for every individual. The students who expressed surprise at how negative some older adults were about aging had interacted primarily with residents who tend to be somewhat pessimistic and cynical, which certainly influenced their views of aging. Thus, it is important that students are exposed to a variety of individuals in order to fully understand and appreciate the heterogeneity of the older population.

Additionally, introductory students will most likely require more preparation than advanced students. The initial intergenerational interaction session revealed that the students most likely should have been provided with more extensive training than a brief tour and orientation. This supposition was confirmed when during the post-experience interviews, the students claimed that they felt rather awkward and unprepared to communicate with the residents during the first session. The residents also observed their discomfort, which inspired them to suggest further training for student visitors.

Furthermore, the amount of coursework and the expectations for service should be fair and balanced. This study attempted to reward students without compromising the academic rigor of the course by providing them with the opportunity to drop their lowest test score if they participated. Several of the students in this study claimed that they would have participated for less incentive, whereas other students emphasized that the reward was one of the primary reasons they elected to participate. Thus, service-learning practitioners must consider the objectives of their course and find ways to compromise between academic work and service work without lessening the quality of the class.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that one of the most innovative aspects of this intergenerational service-learning experience was that it was proposed, developed, and

executed by an advanced undergraduate gerontology student. While this created limitations in terms of time and the direct incorporation of service into the course, it also demonstrated that students, staff, and faculty may collaborate to create better learning and serving opportunities for other students. One of the primary issues with service-learning is the amount of time and resources it requires from faculty. This issue is particularly relevant for students in introductory courses, who typically require more training and supervision than advanced stduents. Involving advanced undergraduate or graduate students is an excellent way to lessen this workload, empower students as scholars, and improve the educational and personal outcomes for students in service-learning courses.

Intergenerational service-learning has a promising future as a contact intervention and as a pedagogical practice. Although further research is needed, it has been shown to contribute to students' learning and educational experience, positively impact their attitudes toward aging and older adults, and add to older adults' quality of life. As society prepares for the significant cultural and societal changes that the aging population will bring, it is essential that intergenerational relationships are encouraged, supported, and utilized in order to fulfill psychological, social, and cultural needs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Generations
(Age and Cohort - Method of Classification)

Socially Meaningful Differences

Point of Intervention

Lack of Intervention

Intervention:
- Intergenerational Service
- Education

Minimal Interaction
Lack of Knowledge
Misconceptions

Stereotypes
Conflict
Negative Attitudes
Ageism

Regular Interaction
Familiarity
Understanding

Positive Relationships
Reciprocity
Shared Perceptions / Wisdom
Tranference
Social Support

Appendix B

Intergenerational Service-Learning Experience
Alternate Assignment & Extra Credit Option
Aging in American Society

Students will have the option of selecting a service-learning experience as an alternate assignment, which will replace their lowest test score. They may also petition for the extra credit option, which will allow them to receive one credit hour for their volunteer work. More information is provided below.

Service-Learning
Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content. (Obtained from Service Learning, servicelearning.org.)

Description
Students will volunteer once a week for four weeks at a continuing care retirement community, at a time to be determined depending on participants' availability. Each session will last approximately one hour. Volunteers will visit with assisted living residents, and participate in discussion groups as well as activities if they are interested in doing so. The discussion groups will be based on course content and current issues concerning aging. Volunteers will have the opportunity to speak with residents about their experiences with growing older in American society, as well as discuss their own experiences with aging. During the last session, the residents and volunteers will prepare a dinner or other special activity together. From that point on, participants may continue to volunteer if they choose.

Transportation
Transportation will be provided during the initial tour as well as the four volunteer sessions. Should students be interested in continuing to volunteer, they will be responsible for their own transportation.

Requirements
Students are required to participate in an initial and post evaluation, as well as four volunteer experiences. In addition to the initial evaluation, volunteers will receive a training and orientation session at the continuing care retirement community.

Dates	Requirement
Week of January 28	Volunteers will receive a training and orientation session at the Knolls. They will also be required to participate in a brief evaluation concerning their attitudes and beliefs toward aging and the older population.
Week of February 4	Volunteer Session One
Week of February 11	Volunteer Session Two
Week of February 18	Volunteer Session Three
Week of February 25	Volunteer Session Four
Week of February 25	Volunteers will participate in a post evaluation, considering their experiences and if and how their views on aging and older adults changed.

Evaluation

The alternate assignment will be graded as follows:

Attendance	20
Participation in Volunteer Sessions	40
Participation in Pre and Post Evaluations	40
Total	**100**

Appendix C

Intergenerational Service-Learning Experience Interest Form

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Year: _____ **Major:** _____

Are you willing to attend a training and orientation session, four volunteer sessions, as well as participate in pre and post evaluations?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Schedule and Availability

Please place an "X" through all the times you are NOT available. If you are only available for half of the hour, please draw a vertical line through it, and place an X though the half you are unavailable.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00		X		X	
11:00		X		X	
12:00		X		X	
1:00					
2:00		X		X	
3:00		X		X	
4:00	X				
5:00	X				
6:00					
7:00					

Questions
Contact X

Appendix D

Sessions One and Two: Getting to Know the Residents

Possible Questions:

Icebreakers:
1. What is your name?
2. How are you?
3. How was your dinner?
4. What did you do today?

Life:
1. What was it like when you were growing up?
2. What is your favorite childhood memory?
3. What were the most important events in your life?
4. Did you work? What was your career?
5. Did you go to school?
   · What were your favorite subjects or what did you study?
6. What are your hobbies?

Family:
1. Are you or were you married?
   · How did you meet your spouse?
   · How long have you been or were you married?
   · What did he or she do?
2. When were your parents born? What did they do?
3. Did you have siblings?
4. Do you have children?
   · Where do they live? How old are they? What do they do?
5. Do you have grandchildren?
   · Where do they live? How old are they? What do they do?

Session Three: The Aging Experience

1. How would you describe your age? Are you young? An adult? Middle-aged? Old?
2. How do you feel others of different ages might describe you?
3. If you could give younger people guidance on aging, what advice would you give?
4. What is it like growing older in American society?

Session Four: Issues in Aging
1. Do you feel people treat you differently as you age? If so, how?
2. Have people ever assumed you were less capable or needed help based on your age? If so, how did that make you feel?
3. Have you ever experienced prejudice or felt discriminated against based on your age?
4. Do you feel isolated from other generations?

5. How often do you interact with family members from different generations? How often do you interact with friends from different generations?
6. What are some myths or misconceptions you would like to debunk or correct about your age group or generation?
7. How do you feel we could improve relations between people of different ages?

Appendix E

Identifier (Birth date): _____

Age: _____

Gender:
❑ Male
❑ Female

With which racial or ethnic group(s) do you most identify? (Mark more than one if applicable.)
❑ African-American (Non-Hispanic)
❑ Asian / Pacific Islanders
❑ Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)
❑ Latino or Hispanic
❑ Native American, Aleut, or Aboriginal Peoples
❑ Other

Level of Education Completed:
❑ Never Attended School
❑ Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)
❑ Grades 9 through 11 (Some High School)
❑ Grade 12 or GED (High School Graduate)
❑ College 1 Year to 3 Years (Some College or Technical School)
❑ College 4 Years (College Graduate)
❑ Graduate School (Advanced Degree)

Before coming to Miami, how often did you interact with family members from older generations?
❑ Never
❑ A few times a year (Holidays, Special Occasions)
❑ 1 – 2 times a month
❑ 3 – 4 times a month
❑ 5 or more times a month

Before coming to Miami, how often did you interact with friends from older generations?
❑ Never
❑ A few times a year (Holidays, Special Occasions)
❑ 1 – 2 times a month
❑ 3 – 4 times a month
❑ 5 or more times a month

At Miami, how often do you interact with family members from older generations?
- ❑ Never
- ❑ A few times a year (Holidays, Special Occasions)
- ❑ 1 – 2 times a month
- ❑ 3 – 4 times a month
- ❑ 5 or more times a month

At Miami, how often do you interact with friends from older generations?
- ❑ Never
- ❑ A few times a year (Holidays, Special Occasions)
- ❑ 1 – 2 times a month
- ❑ 3 – 4 times a month
- ❑ 5 or more times a month

Appendix F

Attitudes Toward Aging Questionnaire

Scale 1: Psychosocial Loss

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Old age is a time of loneliness.					
Old age is a depressing time of life.					
I find it more difficult to talk about my feelings as I get older.					
I see old age mainly as a time of loss.					
I am losing my physical independence as I get older.					
As I get older I find it more difficult to make new friends.					
I don't feel involved in society now that I am older.					
I feel excluded from things because of my age.					

Scale 2: Physical Change

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is important to take exercise at any age.					
Growing older has been easier than I thought.					
I don't feel old.					
My identity is not defined by my age.					
I have more energy now than I expected for my age.					

Problems with my physical health do not hold me back from doing what I want.					
My health is better than I expected for my age.					
I keep as fit and active as possible by exercising.					

Scale 3: Psychological Growth

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As people get older, they are better able to cope with life.					
It is a privilege to grow old.					
Wisdom comes with age.					
There are many pleasant things about growing older.					
I am more accepting of myself as I have grown older.					
It is very important to pass on the benefits of my experiences to younger people.					
I believe my life has made a difference.					
I want to give a good example to younger people.					

Appendix G

Mark each item in one of the seven blanks based on your evaluation of a man 70 – 85 years of age, with "1" indicating the trait on the left and "7" indicating the trait on the right, and "4" indicating neutral.

Trait	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trait
Cheerful								Crabby
Pleasant								Unpleasant
Friendly								Unfriendly
Kind								Cruel
Sweet								Sour
Nice								Mean
Tolerant								Intolerant
Cooperative								Uncooperative
Fair								Unfair
Grateful								Ungrateful
Unselfish								Selfish
Considerate								Inconsiderate
Patient								Impatient
Positive								Negative
Calm								Agitated
Thoughtful								Thoughtless
Humble								Arrogant
Frugal								Generous
Flexible								Inflexible
Good								Bad
Hopeful								Despairing
Optimistic								Pessimistic
Trustful								Suspicious
Safe								Dangerous

Mark each item in one of the seven blanks based on your evaluation of a woman 70 – 85 years of age, with "1" indicating the trait on the left and "7" indicating the trait on the right, and "4" indicating neutral.

Trait	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trait
Cheerful								Crabby
Pleasant								Unpleasant
Friendly								Unfriendly
Kind								Cruel
Sweet								Sour
Nice								Mean
Tolerant								Intolerant
Cooperative								Uncooperative
Fair								Unfair
Grateful								Ungrateful
Unselfish								Selfish
Considerate								Inconsiderate
Patient								Impatient
Positive								Negative
Calm								Agitated
Thoughtful								Thoughtless
Humble								Arrogant
Frugal								Generous
Flexible								Inflexible
Good								Bad
Hopeful								Despairing
Optimistic								Pessimistic
Trustful								Suspicious
Safe								Dangerous

Appendix H

Pre-Service Reflection Questions: Miami Student Participants

1. What do you expect to learn from this experience?
2. What are your feelings? Are you excited, bored, curious, fearful?
3. How do you view aging, such as your own aging or the aging process?
4. How do you view older adults?
5. Do you feel disconnect with other generations, or do you feel closely connected with other generations?
6. Do you think Miami promotes age integration or age segregation?
7. Do you think society promotes age integration or age segregation?
8. Do you think ageism is prevalent in our society?
9. Do you think it is a serious issue, or that there are more important problems to address?
10. Do think ageism will ever receive the same attention that racism or sexism do?
11. What attracted you to participate in a service-learning activity?
12. Is there anything in particular you are interested in asking the residents at the Knolls?

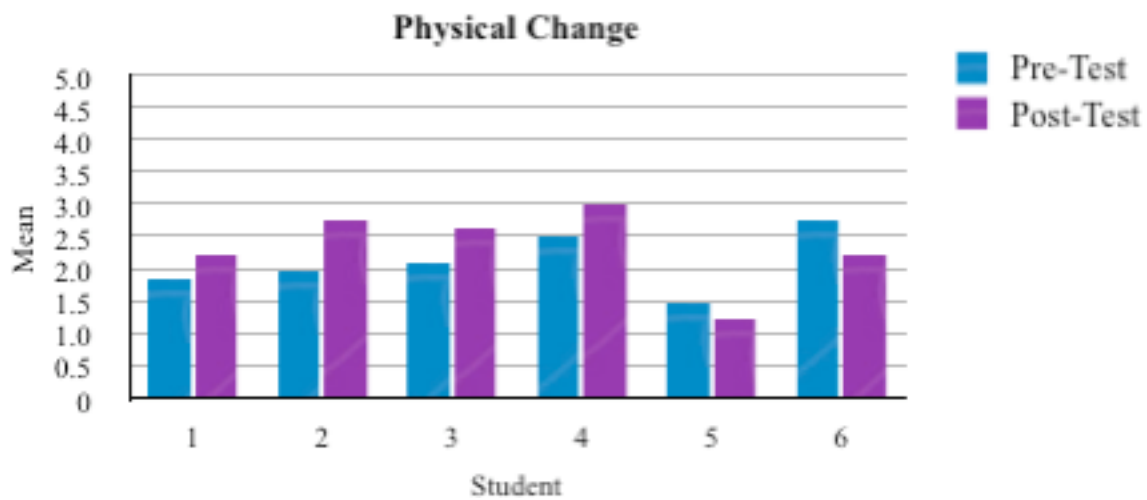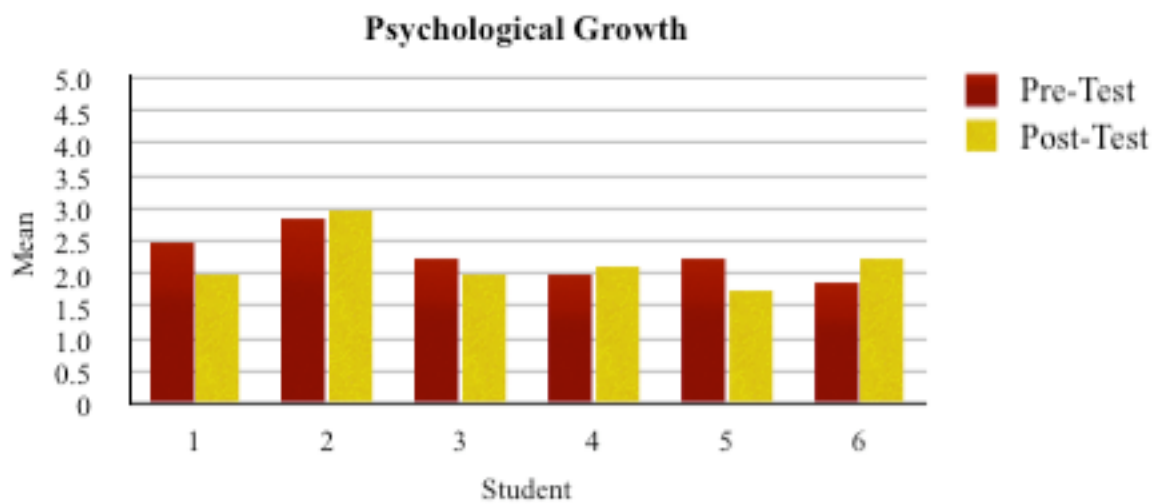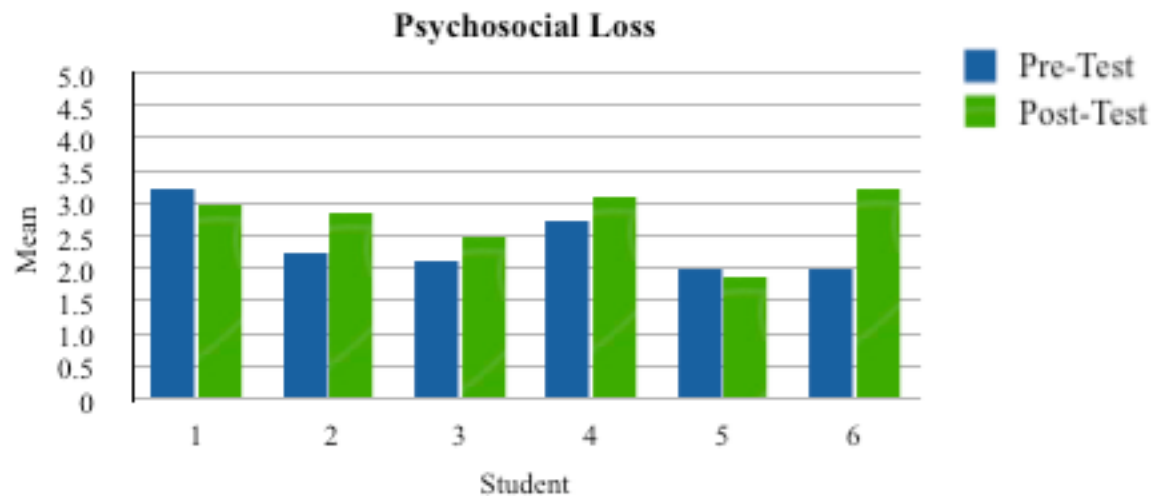**Post-Service Reflection Questions: Miami Student Participants**

1. What did you learn from this experience?
2. Did this service-learning experience enhance what you learned in class? If so, how?
3. Did this experience impact your education? If so, would you consider it negative or positive?
4. How did you feel interacting with older generations? Do you feel less disconnect than before, or do you feel the same?
5. What was the best part of interacting with older adults?
6. What was the most challenging part of interacting with older adults?
7. Did this experience change your views about older adults? If so, how?
8. Did this experience change your views about your own aging? If so, how?
9. After this experience, how do you feel about long term care, such as assisted living facilities and nursing homes?
10. After this experience, how do you feel about having relationships with older adults? Do you think we should promote friendships between different generations, or do you think there is disconnect for a reason?
11. Would you recommend this experience to other students? Why or why not?
12. Would you recommend this experience be incorporated in other classes? Why or why not?
13. What do you think Miami can do to promote more intergenerational interaction?
14. What do you think society can do to promote more intergenerational interaction?
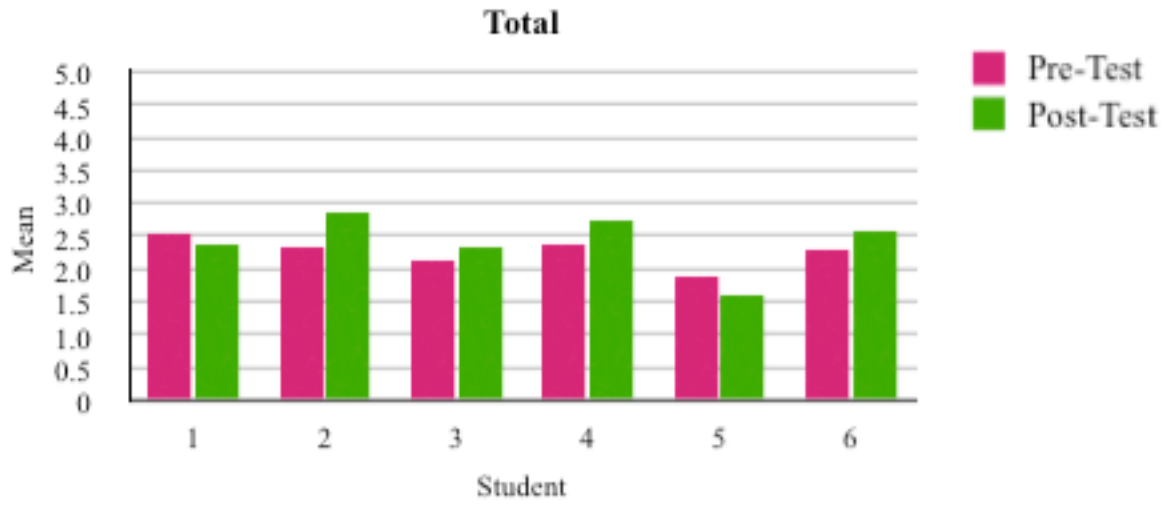
Appendix I

Post-Service Reflection Questions: Assisted Living Residents

1. Overall, did you enjoy the Miami students' visits?
2. What did you particularly like and dislike about the Miami students' visits?
3. Would you change anything about the visits?
4. How do you feel about younger generations?
5. How do you perceive younger generations' attitudes toward aging?
6. How do you perceive younger generations' feelings and attitudes toward older adults?
7. Did the Miami students' visits change your views of younger generations, or do you feel the same as before?
8. Do you feel you receive a satisfactory amount of interaction with younger adults?
9. After this experience, how do you feel about having relationships with younger adults? Do you think we should promote more friendships between different generations, or do you think there is disconnect for a reason?
10. What do you feel you contributed to the students?
11. Do you feel you impacted their education?
12. Did the students' contribute anything to you, and if so, what?
13. What would you change about this project?
14. Do you suggest continuing this project in the future? Why or why not?

Appendix J

Psychosocial Loss

Psychological Growth

Physical Change

Total

Appendix K

Changes in Perceptions of Older Women

Changes in Perceptions of Older Men

Changes in Perceptions of Older Women and Men