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THE MEMORY COLLAGE PROJECT:

ART EDUCATION WITH OLDER ADULTS

by

Jennifer H. Eschedor

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

The Memory Collage Project was an art experience for older adults that used the natural process of life review to inspire imagery to create a visual collage. Eighteen older adults, ages 62-94, were asked to reminisce about an experience they wanted to share with others in both a visual medium and a tape-recorded story. Using copies of their own photographs, *Life* magazines from the 50’s and 60’s, maps and other materials, memory collages were created in a one-hour session. The culminating event was an art exhibition that featured the storytelling of four of the participants.

Participants were interviewed about their experience, which provided data for quantitative analysis. I also obtained data from observations of videotape footage that recorded my instruction and interactions, as well as the group dynamics throughout the production and at the closing exhibition. These data were coded to develop qualitative responses to my research questions. I examined the value of the lesson plan, specific teaching strategies and how I would adjust my current elementary teaching pedagogy to encourage participation from older adults.

Curriculum has not been developed for older adults in the field of Art Education. Life expectancies are increasing, so there is a greater demand for educational opportunities in our later years. This thesis describes a studio project utilizing the process of life review and examines effective instruction and teaching strategies for an older population.
CHAPTER 1
STATEMENT OF INQUIRY

Introduction

At what age does a person become an "older adult"? Is it appropriate to use one particular birthday as the criteria for this label? In the United States, one's 65th birthday denotes the "official beginning of old age" (Lamdin, 1997, p. 16) and qualifies people for retirement as well as Social Security benefits despite their mental and physical abilities.

The proportion of older adults is expected to increase in the next few decades. By 2015, according to Lamdin (1997), it is predicted that the number of older Americans will equal the number of children 18 years and younger (p. 6). In the 1990s, life expectancy increased to an average of 72 for men and 78.9 for women (p. 5). According to Robert Butler, M.D. (1999) between 2020 and 2030, one out of five Americans will be over 65, making them the largest generation of older persons in U.S. history (p. xi).

Newer terminologies label three distinct "degrees of old". They are the "young-old" (55-65), the "middle-old" (66-75), and the "old-old" (76+) (Lamdin, 1997, p. 15). The "old-old" is the most rapidly growing elderly age group. Between 1960 and 1994, the "old-old" increased 274 percent (Friedman, 1999, p. 1). The term "older adult" is preferable to patronizing terms like senior citizen, retiree, etc. and is the "language of choice when talking about the 65 plus population" (p. 173). Throughout this thesis, "older adult" will refer to those who are 65 and older.

Depression and a sense of uselessness are often associated with aging. The
A stereotype of elderly people is that their capabilities are diminishing and they are becoming incompetent and forgetful (Kauppenin, 1988). Our stereotypes of older adults no longer apply, yet, we have had little experience dealing with productive and high-functioning older adults. We commonly associate repetitious storytelling and reminiscence with aging. You may know someone who repeats certain stories about their life experiences. Reminiscing results from the natural process of life review and can be considered a special ability if we understand how it is useful.

Working years have not increased proportionally to our longevity. Until recently, retirement has represented a time to relax and “do nothing.” Some people miss the social involvement of their career and no longer feel vital and useful. For those that do not establish new social relationships, the feeling of isolation can result in depression. The issue of the “quality of life” becomes a bigger concern, not only to older adults, but to society in general. If steps are not taken to promote good mental health and a sense of usefulness, the older adult could become a great burden on society. As Lois Lamdin (1997) stated, the most obvious burden is the rising cost of health care and institutionalization.

Today, adults are not only healthier, better educated and more financially secure than any other previous generation, but also they are engaged in learning to a much greater extent. Learning enhances the quality of their lives and allows them to contribute to their communities in positive ways (Lamdin, 1997, p. 161). Through my own experience, I have seen that art education plays a role in providing learning experiences that inherently promote good mental health and could have far reaching positive effects.
on other people as well.

Personal Background

I have treasured the stories and company of elderly people throughout my life. I always took special note of the stories I heard repeatedly because they usually represented life's lessons. I especially enjoyed hearing my grandparents tell stories about raising their families. To imagine my parents as children with their siblings during the Depression fascinated me. Learning about their experiences so different from mine, provided insight into the adults they had become. I feel an immediate comfort in the presence of older adults, so it is no wonder I sought their reassurance when I first became an art teacher.

During the first few years of my teaching career, I had two separate opportunities to solicit the expertise and guidance of older adults. In both cases, I wanted to involve them in the creation of a large-scale project from start to finish. I chose to include them in our classroom community because of their specific interests and thought their participation would add a sense of history and importance to our project.

The first intergenerational project was a quilt made by collaborating with an African American quilter who shared her knowledge of the history of quiltmaking as well as technical instruction with my first-grade art class. Each student designed a quilt block to represent a memory from the school year. With the help of their families and community members, the quilt was pieced and assembled in a "quilting bee".

The second project was a large three-dimensional map inspired by a grandfather
of one of my students. He visited my third-grade art classes to describe his career as a city planner and share his valuable map collection. Together we introduced a map project that utilized the students' newly gained information. The children worked in small groups drawing roads, buildings, people, and trees and collaborated to construct a large three-dimensional map.

I appreciated the contributions the older adults made to my curriculum and valued their willingness and desire to share themselves with a younger generation. Even more, I enjoyed forming friendships with them and became keenly aware of their personal pursuits and their continued interest in learning. It became clear that my next career step should be to explore how older adults could benefit from participating in an art experience.

My Teaching Pedagogy

My certification program at Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania supported DBAE (discipline-based art education). My five years experience teaching art to elementary students has required that I develop a variety of teaching techniques in order to be effective. I found that art curriculum has to be taught in a format that deals directly with classroom management. I have very few discipline problems when children are engaged in learning, and for me, avoiding routine in my introductions to new media creates more interest in the subject we are studying. Rather than always approaching a studio project with slides, lecture and a demonstration, I have found it constructive and educational to allow students to begin working in a certain medium for their initial
experience.

When I use this sequence, I often review historical artworks of a similar medium or theme in the following class, and then ask my students to critically examine their own artwork and that of others. This approach is usually successful because once a student has gone through the actual artmaking process and experienced making their own decisions, they are able to understand the critical decisions made by other artists. I have found with younger children, that satisfying that need to “do it”, is actually conducive to more in-depth learning in subsequent classes.

Art Education with Older Adults – What is Out There?

There is limited current information on the topic of Art Education for older adults. There were articles written in the late 1980's by authors such as, Pearl Greenberg, Donald Hoffman and Heta Kauppenin. They each made contributions to the field, but there was not any comprehensive information about curriculum and teaching strategies. Recognizing that they were part of a select group, they all predicted the necessity of further research.

Greenberg, known as an advocate for lifelong learning in the arts, felt that it was vital that curriculum for older adults be challenging and geared to their intellectual ability. She stated in 1987, that activity directors have relied on “kits, copying works from post cards, calendars and ditto sheets” (p. 6). This approach to art education requires that students follow directions, but lacks opportunity for creative expression and a comprehensive understanding of art.
Self-Directed Learning

A repeated suggestion for good educational practice with older adults is to develop opportunities to increase the individual's self-awareness and the capacity for self-monitoring and reflection. Called "self-directed learning", this educational practice has proven effective with older adults because it does not take away their control in a learning-related activity (Tuijnman & Van Der Kamp, 1992, p. 12).

According to Paul Edelson (1998), self-direction in art education "recognizes and takes as its point of departure the fact that all key decisions are already being made by the learner: choices on what to take and when and, more significantly, if and what to learn" (p. 36). Edelson stated that adult education is different from K-12 education because the emphasis is not on a teacher-centered model. Jean Ellen Jones (1998) noted that if an older student is given the opportunity to formulate their own personal goals, they feel more "ownership" and this increases their self-direction (p. 44). Self-direction and personal control of standards and rewards increases one's interest, which is the motivating factor for pursuing art in older years.

Much of the information about art programming for older adults emphasized the importance of developing activities that encouraged personal interactions and the development of a positive self-image. In addition to this program goal, Donald Hoffman (1992) listed criteria for developing good lessons. They are: "to relate to the interests and needs of the older arts student; begin at the educational level of participants; develop increased knowledge of the arts; grow from the present concerns of older students and build upon their experience; provide opportunities for joint selection of activities,
methods, and evaluation; provide older persons with carefully designed, success-oriented opportunities and allow each participant to use talents and interests for the benefit of the group” (p. 82).

Although acquiring knowledge of the arts is listed as a goal, most of these criteria are of humanistic concern. This is typical of available information on instruction for older adults. I just wanted to get my hands on something concrete that was tried and successful. I wanted curriculum specifically designed for the older adult’s experience.

After reviewing a current book published by the National Art Education Association, titled Crossroads: The Challenge of Lifelong Learning (1998), it is clear that there is still no existing national curriculum, or even expectations for older adult art education. According to Greenberg, the explanation is simple – “There is so little money connected with programs for elders, and so few folks who know what a good program might be like, and little chance of getting some of the jobs (which ought to be growing and growing but do not yet exist)…” (personal communication, June 5, 2000).

**Existing Programming**

In 1987, Greenberg asserted that unless qualified art teachers with backgrounds in the visual arts enter the field, a lackluster approach to art education would prevail. Nearly fifteen years later, researchers still claim that existing programming is not meeting the needs of older adults. Schuller (1991) stated that the understanding of adult development lags well behind the understanding of child development. While there are quite a few curriculums in art education for a K-12 audience, there is a lack of
information available on curriculums for an older population.

Curriculum for K-12 art education distinguishes between a creative approach that emphasizes self-expression and discipline-based art education (DBAE). A discipline-based curriculum emphasizes four content areas: aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production (Clark, Day & Greer, 1987, p. 133). The goal of discipline-based art education is "to develop mature students who are comfortable and familiar with major aspects of the disciplines of art" (Greer, 1997, p. 4). DBAE puts the study of art into general education and as a result, makes art educators accountable. Since there is no comparable research in this field with older adults, there are no clearly stated goals or standards for teaching art to this population. It was only natural that I would want to approach working with older adults in a way that was familiar and comfortable for me. DBAE and my elementary pedagogy provided an entry-way to working with older adults.

The Impact of the Negative Stereotype

Contributing to the lack of programming has been a negative stereotype associated with the elderly person. Growing old is often viewed as a reduction in mental, physical and creative abilities. It is not a surprise that the public views careers with the elderly as undesirable. In order to promote interest in art education for older adults, public perceptions of their capabilities and desires must be updated and based in fact. In order for money to be invested in research in this field, information must be available about the potential gains, both personally and to our whole society.

As the negative stereotypes about aging are deconstructed, the purpose of retirement is also reevaluated. One of the factors contributing to a new outlook on
retirement is lifelong learning. The popularity of older adults attending classes for employment, volunteering and personal growth continues to increase (Lamdin, 1997). A survey administered by Elderlearning in 1997, found the most interest was in “music, art, dance and arts-related crafts” (p. 84). For many older adults, retirement offers the opportunity to pursue new educational experiences without the demands of earning a living and raising a family.

Reasons for Making Art

Erikson and Erikson (1978) stated that most elderly have a need for mental and spiritual experiences. The middle stages of life did not allow for these experiences, therefore, learning in the arts is enriching in later stages. Cynthia Taylor (1987) believed that the human desire to leave a record and make sense of one’s life is closely related to the natural process of life review. Creating an artwork as a visual memory offers comfort to elders.

Robert Coles (1989) has written about the value of storytelling as a “humanizing and meaning-giving force for human betterment in a variety of life contexts” (p.12). By creating a story, one organizes a thoughtful account of an event. My interest is to use the oral narrative to inspire the selection of visual images for the creation of a collage. This will provide a different recording of that story. The collage provides a visual record that is not only a visual artwork, but also acts as a tool for future storytelling.

Special Abilities in Old Age

Kauppenin (1988) stated that there are two special mental abilities inherent to the processes of aging. The process of life review is experienced universally when "past
experiences and unresolved conflicts return to consciousness for reexamination and final evaluation" (Butler, 1963, p. 390). Coleman (1999) asserted that the construction of a story was the common outcome of reminiscence and developing the skills to express stories was central to the task of achieving reconciliation between conflicting elements.

Another mental power according to Kauppenin (1988) was integrative understanding. This term, defined by Warner Schaie (1977-78), refers to the ability to recognize and value conflicts and opposing ideas. Integrative understanding is achieved simply by finding value in a range of life experiences and knowing that they make for a meaningful life. This skill is applicable to discussing art as well as creating art.

The desire to synthesize one's life and feel a sense of order and accomplishment is normal. However, reminiscence can result in unresolved conflicts and guilt. According to Coleman (1999), obstacles to reminiscence and storytelling vary depending on the individual. Some may have blocked or forgotten their past, not realizing the value of their experiences. Whether the outcome of reminiscence is positive or negative, this process is necessary for successful aging (Kauppenin, 1988). When this process is experienced privately, it will likely increase self-esteem and enhance their "quality of life". Additionally, the results of reminiscing could actually benefit our whole society. If an older adult selects a medium for storytelling that can be shared, their process of life review could be made public and others could benefit from their experiences.

Creating an outlet for older adults to maximize use of their inherent abilities seems to be a logical formula for curriculum development. Next, I wanted information on the best environment and effective teaching strategies for this population. Hoffman
asserted that it is vital to provide an atmosphere of acceptance to encourage experimentation. He believed that the role of the art educator was in part to help students develop positive feelings toward their own artwork and that of others, regardless of diversity. In order to work with this population, it seems that a careful instructional approach and sensitivity are prerequisite to bestowing art techniques or history. One must develop trust and assuredness before real instruction can take place.

The Memory Collage Project

Utilizing memories as a catalyst for creating art seemed like an interesting idea that would not intimidate people in an initial art experience. Using the available information about the elderly population, I developed a project proposal for this thesis project. Additionally, my elementary art teaching experiences were transferable to an older population. For example, I know it is necessary to meet the learner at his or her ability level to maintain comfort. In order to create interest, the lesson must be open-ended enough to appeal to a wide range of personalities and ability levels and skills. Utilizing a student’s narrative or personal story prescribes certain imagery that offers direction in an assignment. Encouraging people to be introspective is the very skill that Greenberg (1987) insists qualified art teachers must develop in older students to help them overcome fears and have successful experiences.

The visual medium that seemed most appropriate for a project inspired by memories was collage. By asking the participants to select from pre-existing imagery, the pressure to create their own original images was removed. Hoffman (1988) stated,
"Naïve adult students are more at home visually with recognizable symbols, and uncomfortable with more abstract styles. (...) Occasionally an adult will take artistic liberties within the realistic mode but this attempt usually takes the form of rearrangement of subject in a work that is fundamentally realistic in nature” (p. 54). I concluded that providing the participants with old magazines – realistic images from the 50’s and 60’s would help to prompt memories from an earlier time. When I introduced the project, I encouraged the participants to look for photographs (that would be xeroxed and returned unharmed), memorabilia or any other materials at home that they would want to use in their collage. I assured them that I would provide materials, too. Many people organized their thoughts and prepared materials for the next week. The technical procedure for making a collage is very simple and straightforward. Even a hesitant participant would find scissors and glue sticks user-friendly.

Four pre-service teachers in the Art Education graduate program volunteered to assist with the project. They were available to xerox pictures, converse and problem-solve with participants and lend general support to the project. Their assistance enabled 18 people to fully participate in the project within the short one-hour time allotment.

In addition to a visual art experience, I felt it was important to offer another medium for recording their story. Participants were encouraged to tape-record their stories on a cassette tape. There would be options available to encourage everyone’s participation. For those that felt comfortable with both visual and audio recording, each work would compliment the other. The final exhibition allowed four participants to share both their visual and their oral story.
Description of Inquiry

Creating an outlet for older adults to maximize use of their inherent abilities seemed to be a logical formula for curriculum development. I wanted to provide an opportunity for older adults to utilize their life experiences in a visual and oral story. The following five questions framed my research project:

1. What visual commonalities and differences would exist in the completed memory collages?
2. How would the elderly approach a project based on a memory?
3. What specific teaching strategies and types of motivation are effective with an older population?
4. How will I alter my current teaching pedagogy with elementary children to be effective with an older population?
5. Would older adults enjoy working on the Memory Collage Project?

Study Design and Methodology

I called several adult day-care centers, in hopes of finding a group of older adults that would participate in an art experience. After a month of unreturned phone calls, I spoke with the Director of Older Adult Ministry in a church in Tucson, Arizona. She organizes weekly programs for a group of older adults who meet for spiritual and social reasons. It was clear that she was personally involved with the welfare of each individual and the success of the group’s gatherings. For many of the participants, she explained, the meetings were their social interaction for the week. We discussed several project
ideas and she graciously invited me to work with this established group to conduct my thesis project.

The Project Site

The participating group consisted of four men and fourteen women, ranging in age from 62-years old to 94-years old, with a wide range of incomes and experiences. Many of the group's members had moved from other states to Tucson, Arizona, for their retirement years. Most of the participants live independently and all of them attend meetings at the church voluntarily. Regular attendance was not common for all of the members, due to illness and transportation difficulties. Since it is a church affiliated group, each morning meeting begins with a devotion. Normally, a program follows that features a guest speaker, performance or activity. The meetings normally last about two hours and conclude with a shared hot lunch.

The Design of the Memory Collage Project

The group participated in the project for four consecutive weeks. During my first visit, the process of making a memory collage was described. An example of a completed collage was shown, and it was suggested that everyone reminisce about a memory that they would like to represent in the collage medium. The second week, the participants made their collages and recorded their stories. One videographer recorded my instruction and interactions, while another recorded the group interactions and dynamics. This video footage was coded and used for qualitative analysis.

My third visit allowed me to individually interview the participants. I acted as both a teacher and a researcher to experience first-hand how the participants would
respond to the various steps of the collage process. Because I wanted to examine my specific instruction and the results, it was vital that I be the teacher. Introspectively, I was comparing and contrasting this experience with former experiences as an elementary art teacher. Since I wanted consistent interviewing techniques, it was necessary for me to be the researcher to ask the interview questions and record the responses, rather than asking for volunteer assistance. The data from the interviews were used for quantitative analysis.

The culminating event took place in the fourth week - an exhibition of all of the memory collages. During a short closing presentation, four people volunteered to share their collage and tell their story to the audience. This was also recorded on two videotapes.

*Autobiographical Inquiry*

The "teacher-research movement" is gaining acceptance in the professional realm. The premise is that teaching is a form of inquiry and the study of one's day-to-day interactions with students, curricular decisions and instructional techniques provides a way for teachers to reflect and analyze their professional development (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 13).

According to Cole and Knowles (2000), by creating an "autobiographical inquiry", or by reconstructing life experiences, one is able to identify repeating themes. Professional inquiries are rooted in the "context of personal histories" (p.15), so before we can know ourselves as professionals, we must first know ourselves as people. This
concept resonates with me. I am by nature an introspective person, so using an autobiographical method of inquiry seems logical and beneficial. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), teacher-researchers are increasingly acknowledged in research fields for their valuable contributions to teacher education.

I mentioned earlier that I have gotten successful results when I use a variety of teaching methods. At the root of that success, I believe, is my own need for variety and engagement. I have developed different tactics that add humor and complexity to my artroom, and with that, comes children’s enthusiasm for learning about art. Out of a cardboard box and papier-mache, I made a character named Arty. You see, Arty can speak, but only I can hear him. Questions about art history, vocabulary words or directions are hidden inside his head, along with occasional prototypes for projects. He functions as a vessel, but also as an incredible tool for engaging children. The students want to please Arty, and when they are very quiet, they are sure that they hear him talk, too. Arty resulted from discussions I had with veteran teachers, who have also tried to develop the most effective teaching strategies for a challenging population. My constant review of instructional techniques, or my “autobiographical inquiry”, guides my day-to-day development as a teacher.

Because the role of an art teacher is so multi-faceted, it is not realistic to record observations during instruction time. However, video cameras make self-observation relatively easy. Cole and Knowles stated, “the key to learning from looking is detailed documentation” (p. 89). Copious notetaking is a necessary procedure for identifying
repeated themes and possible solutions. Identifying questions for further exploration and embracing the notion that professional development is an autobiographical project are very important to my role as teacher-researcher.

**Interview Questions**

Participants were interviewed during my third visit about their art training since elementary school, whether they completed and enjoyed working on the memory collage and if they had a vision of what they were trying to achieve. They were also asked if they found my instruction/interaction helpful, if talking with me or others helped them focus on their idea, whether the process of using memory as a subject in an art experience was interesting and if they intend to share the collage and tape with someone.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The data I collected from the interview questions were used for quantitative analysis. The “yes/no” responses from the eighteen participants were tabulated into frequency percentages. A personal narrative described my instruction and interactions as observed from the video footage. Additionally, the video footage was observed for data that were coded for twelve participants in my qualitative analysis. Oral narratives were transcribed and collages were analyzed in a qualitative format for five participants. It was important that I analyzed the data using both quantitative and qualitative methods to best answer my research questions.

Two professional videographers documented the collage production as well as
the culminating exhibition and presentation. The raw footage allowed me to study my instruction and interactions with the participants as well as observe the group dynamics.

I used a triangulated method to obtain my data in a qualitative inquiry. The sources for my data coding were as follows: 1) Descriptive responses to the interview questions. 2) Descriptions of the finished collages described by subject, materials, composition and design elements. 3) Summaries of the contents of the oral stories made from a tape recording and 4) Observations made from videotape footage of the entire production process and final exhibition.

I coded the data in four descriptive categories:

- The formal qualities of the collage by subject, materials, composition and design elements. (Collage Description)
- The content of the narrative story as recorded. (Oral Narrative)
- My instructional strategies. (Instruction)
- How the participant acquired the imagery he/she used. (Images Used)

These categories best organized my observations for the qualitative analysis.

**Significance of the Study**

As was mentioned earlier, literature in the field of Art Education lacks studies that describe curriculum and teaching strategies for the older adult. It is apparent that older adults are pursuing educational opportunities. By conducting this study, I gained insight and experience that will provide me with the basis of a strong lesson for art curriculum with older adults. Art by its very nature invites a great deal of interest, whether it is in art
production, art history, aesthetics or art criticism. The findings of the Memory Collage Project will allow me to contribute to research in this field.

Creating and learning about art can be the key to satisfaction and fulfillment in later years (Taylor, 1987). I am pioneering research with the elderly that could have a positive impact on their mental health. This could contribute to a decrease in expensive healthcare costs associated with long hospital stays and medications used to combat depression. Those who participated, learned about the artists who have made collages (art history), made their own memory collage (production), and tape-recorded a story that will be theirs to keep and could become a lasting tool for sharing with others.

The public perception of the older adult as a poor, frail and dependent person is being deconstructed (Lamdin, 1997). In a recent survey, Lamdin reported that 79% of older adults consider themselves in good health and 94% have enough to do to keep busy. Many adults are attending classes and exemplifying the ideal of the lifelong learner. Since there is a high demand for art instruction, there is a need for knowledge of successful ways to direct meaningful projects. Information regarding the Memory Collage Project could also be valuable to people outside the field of Art Education, since many of the people who direct activity programs have no background in art (Greenberg, 1987).

Limitations of the Study

This was an intact group, so the members were already familiar with each other and freely communicated throughout the project. It is unlikely that this congeniality would
occur in a group of strangers, regardless of their ages. The Memory Collage Project should be presented to a random sample, with different teachers and different groups of elderly participants to draw more conclusions about the effectiveness of the project. A larger sample would quantify the results of the interviews. Since it was such a small group, it would be hard to generalize about its success with a wider elderly population. The age variance from the youngest to oldest participant was 32 years which spanned many years and experiences.

I was both the teacher and the researcher, so there may be unintentional bias in the data collection. Another limitation was the short time frame allowed for the introduction, production, interviews and final art exhibition. This project was an initial art experience using reminiscence as a catalyst. I would have liked to follow it with additional instruction that would strengthen my role as an art educator rather than a facilitator. Since I was able to develop rapport with this project, the next step would be to take it further and incorporate more actual art instruction.

Summary of Chapter 1

My interest in conducting a research project with older adults stems from the respect and admiration I have developed for this population in both familial and professional situations. I am interested in instructing art to the elderly and wanted to experience first-hand how effective this lesson plan (See Appendix C) and my teaching strategies are with this population. Since demographics suggest a dramatic increase in the number of older adults in our society in upcoming years, it is crucial that their role is
perceived as contributive to society. Existing stereotypes must be deconstructed in order to best utilize the many inherent strengths adults possess in older years.

Discovering that little research exists about the older adult in Art Education, specifically about appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies, I was motivated to develop a lesson plan that would utilize the natural process of life review. A video recording of my interactions with participants, personal interviews, the completed memory collages and my first-hand experiences provided me with data for analysis. By examining the data, I will better understand the results of using memory to inspire a visual artwork. Even though several researchers have suggested for years that instruction to the elderly must be challenging and purposeful, very few have described successful applications.

**Organization of Chapters**

In Chapter 2, I will provide a review of literature pertinent to this thesis. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology and discuss the quantitative analysis for the Memory Collage Project. In Chapter 4, the data gathered from the actual collages, the raw footage of the videotapes and the tape-recorded oral stories are coded and analyzed to address my research questions. The summary, conclusions and implications are discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organization of Chapter

This chapter is intended to provide a comprehensive look into the research and literature that most directly relates to the development of the Memory Collage Project. The Introduction explains the necessity of art curriculum development. Then, current approaches to Art Education for adults are described. Next, literature that provided relevant information about the older adult learner (including a biography of an older artist) and the collage medium are reviewed.

Introduction

According to research in the area of longevity, life expectancy continues to increase. In Elderlearning by Lamdin (1997), Dr. Robert Butler, Dean of American Gerontologists at the National Institute on Aging, stated that there is no biologic reason why we cannot live to be 110" (p. 6). Our increased lifespan represents potentially vital, productive years in which older people can either contribute to our society or drain its resources. Lamdin (1997) noted "The best insurance against decline is a sense of participation, of active involvement in society" (p.19).

Lamdin (1997) asserted that “the number of working adults who supply the tax base is decreasing while the proportion of older adults is increasing” (p.4). This could develop into a national crisis if older adults are not viewed as contributors to our society. Ageism and negative stereotypes still exist, but recently, senior citizens are regarded as
an under-tapped resource for volunteer labor, financial support to their children and political activism. The stereotype of the older adult is being overthrown as more and more people realize that they are capable of continued intellectual ability.

Excluding degenerative disease, new studies are proving that with age, the brain does not necessarily deteriorate in ways that prevent learning (Lamdin, 1997). The contemporary older adult is healthier, happier and less dependent than in the past. As a result, retirement is not viewed as a time to die, but rather as Lamdin stated, a “new and active developmental stage of life” (p.10).

As our lifespan increases, more options exist for our retirement years. The choices that older adults make will determine whether they are an asset or burden to society. One of the factors that contribute to the new outlook on retirement is lifelong learning. Continuing education to remain active at work and volunteering or lending support within a family structure holds promise for maintaining good mental health into our later years. In a survey distributed by Elderlearning (Lamdin, 1997), respondents were asked to check all of the areas that explained their interest in learning. The most popular response (79.9%) was “for the joy of learning”, next was “to pursue a long-standing interest or hobby” (57.9%), then “to meet people, socialize” (53.6%) and then “to engage in creative activity” (47.2%) (p.75). According to Lamdin, the response “to meet people, socialize” was more common among females and those that live alone. More women than men participate in adult learning and “clustering” occurs between ages 65 and 79 (p. 68). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the most popular response to “what they choose to learn” was “music, art, dance and arts-related crafts” (p. 74). What this study
suggests to the field of Art Education is that a growing population wants to learn about art in a group setting.

Current Approaches to Art Education for Older Adults

Donald Hoffman (1992) described the current offerings in older adult programs as ranging from highly technical, challenging opportunities to very poorly organized, copying activities. He gave, as an example, a kindergarten-level project at an adult daycare center where participants pasted precut circles into snowmen and were required to complete it like the example. To present an art project as mindless "entertainment" is a disservice to the field and yet this approach to programming is most commonly found in senior centers. Providing "busy work" may be "the easy way out" as Pearl Greenberg (1987) suggested or it could be an attempt to entice new students to participate (p. 6).

Greenberg (1987) stated that using "kits, copying works from post cards and calendars" (p.6) may be an effort to reduce the inhibition older adults express about making art. Although these kits appear to be a creative activity to some, they do not provide intellectual challenge and certainly cannot encourage individualized artistic expression. According to Hoffman (1992) the reason for interest in using such a kit was to produce something that looked successful.

It is understandable that adults feel inferior and self-conscious when creating artwork if their art education and experiences ended in early adolescence. Hoffman (1992) stated that adult students probably did not get an in-depth art education in their early years. He mentioned many older adults usually have "underdeveloped
understandings of art, aesthetics, and art history” (p. 54). DBAE has altered the approach to art education for the K-12 population, but those who are older adults today, did not get exposed to a comprehensive art education.

According to Laura Chapman (1982), the recent adult interest in art is more a result of the increase in college graduates following the baby boom. The arts audience as a whole is an educated group with “an average income well above the national average” (p. 4). Adults who do not pursue an art activity say that the reasons are a lack of time, a lack of training and a lack of talent (p. 5). Feeling inadequate about one’s training in the arts could certainly contribute to the popularity of the hobby-craft industry. In order to make many crafts (especially those in a “kit” format) the only requirements are an ability to follow directions, sufficient time and money for supplies. The public perceives “crafts” as being less rigorous within an educational framework as compared to other media such as drawing, painting and art appreciation, yet, crafts do attract the greater number of adults.

Art curriculums exist across the country today in K-12 education that implement an interdisciplinary approach to art education. There are increased opportunities for integrating other subject areas with the arts when instructing art history, aesthetics, art criticism and art production (the components of DBAE). The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has a Lifelong Learning Affiliate interested in attracting “before and beyond K-12 art teachers” (Michael, 1998, p. 155). Currently, anyone can teach art to an older population, if they can talk someone into giving them a teaching job. John Michael stated that the first step in improving art instruction for an older population is to
attract art teachers that are certified to teach K-12. He noted that requiring certification would not be successful in the present social/political climate, so he recommended efforts be made to recruit retired art educators through the Lifelong Learning Affiliate of NAEA.

A program in Washington D.C. was developed to teach art appreciation to the elderly. After teaching art history in a nursing home in Washington, D.C., Joan Hart founded "Museum One". Hart created a program over 12 years ago, that employed teachers to teach art appreciation outreach courses as well as workshops with specific themes, such as "Renaissance to Modern Art" (Larson, 1994). She also had an established training program for staff members at retirement institutions, senior centers and adult day-care centers. She marketed slide packets and study guides with art history information and questions to stimulate discussions with an older adult group. As Greenberg stated in 1987, there are often well-meaning volunteers with little or no background in art that are leading the art activities in senior centers and nursing homes. Hart has implemented a training program to educate those caregivers and provide them with a concrete art history curriculum.

Self-Directed Learning

Hiemstra (1991), a general educator, stated that individualized instruction allows the older learner to assume responsibility for his or her own learning (p. 56). A more teacher-centered approach would probably encourage more inhibition as adults work to model and emulate the individual style of the instructor. Jean Ellen Jones (1993) stated that the higher one's education level, the more self-directed the learning, regardless of age. Those with high self-confidence may enroll in a professional art class such as those
offered at a university. The next level would be a community art center or recreation
center and those with even less self-confidence would look for a kit or an activity that
does not provide challenge. An instructor can use various teaching approaches to
accommodate an inconfident learner, such as “removing any competition or time barriers,
limiting the possibility for learners to make errors, or reducing high risk situations” (p.
57).

Reasons for Making Art

In addition to making art as an educational and expressive experience, artmaking
fulfills other needs specific to the older adult. Taylor (1987) wrote about the way making
art can address loss and depression for the elderly. The process of creating an artwork
can result in a feeling of “distant intimacy” which is a term gerontologists use to describe
the sense of closeness experienced by interacting with family members regardless of their
geographical distance. Taylor noted that artmaking simulates a similar sense of intimacy.
She stated “The distance separating the older adult from an intimate art experience is the
distance from eye to hand, easel or wedging board” (p. 17). Initiating an artwork could
increase independence and lessen the feeling of loneliness, especially for someone who
has lost a spouse or whose children have moved away.

Taylor (1987) stated, “To be comforted and later remembered is a universal wish
among elders. (…) The arts offer a way for older people to feel as if they are
contributing to the world; their reflective thinking and expressions of transformations can
be beneficial to others as well as to themselves” (p. 14). The finished product that results
from making art could be a vehicle for contributing to others. Additionally, the art process and resulting product could provide a genuine sense of accomplishment.

**Applying Life Review to the Process of Making Art**

Heta Kauppenin stated in 1988 that life review is a special mental ability inherent to the process of aging and is potentially tied to the process of making art. Coleman (1999) stated that practitioners frowned upon reminiscence in the 1960s. Viewed as a form of mental deterioration, reminiscence was discouraged.

In contrast, specialists in gerontology understand life review as a “natural universally experienced stage of adult personality development” (Kauppinen & McKee, 1988, p. 15). It is a natural process of emotional development that occurs as people recognize they are living in their final years and they are reviewing unresolved feelings about past experiences and relationships in an effort to resolve them. According to Polkinghorne (1996), life review occurs “naturally” when people are in crisis and faced with questions of their identity and life’s meaning (p. 96). The outcome for most is that they can make final judgements about what has been good or bad and meaningful in their lives.

According to Coleman (1999), reminiscence can be “integrative,” in that it leads to conflict resolution and reconciliation, and integrates the past and present. This type of reminiscence is beneficial to the aging process. Coleman also noted that reminiscence can be “obsessive” which is described as “persistent rumination that repeats the same
problems without moving toward resolution" (p. 133). In order to be able to integrate the events of their lives, some people may need guidance from caregivers or educators.

**Personal Storytelling**

Storytelling is often the result of reminiscence. Coleman (1999) stated that there are opportunities for providing psychologically supportive activities because storytelling tends to have a social significance. The potential for nonjudgmental support from those listening and “being present” contributes to positive mental health (Kenyon, 1996, p. 38).

Coleman asserts that people may need assistance to tell a satisfactory life story. According to Polkinghorne (1996), creating a narrative is not just a simple recall of the past. He stated, “Narrative structuring is an interpretation of life in which past events and happenings are understood as meaningful from a current perspective of their emplotted contribution to an outcome” (p. 89). The result of interviews he conducted in 1993 showed the majority of people felt connection with life themes, such as family and friends, work or continuity of surroundings. Some felt a disconnection with their past and present lives. This suggests that people who encourage reminiscence and storytelling must also be prepared to deal with the consequences of a negative experience.

Personal storytelling allows one to “re-story” parts of their lives that assists in the attainment of meaning in life (Kenyon, 1996, p. 37). The outcome from the storytelling process may include wisdom, authenticity and acceptance – positive effects that could be more common with appropriate intervention.
**Producing a Narrative**

The process of composing a narrative is a cognitive operation that employs a plot or storyline to configure all the parts into a whole. Using people's narratives as data for the study of lives is a relatively recent development in the social sciences. Historically, research procedures from the physical sciences were used to interpret human behavior. Because a narrative provides nonquantified data, its analysis was avoided. Using qualitative procedures has increased our understanding of the meaning people give to their actions and life events (Polkinghorne, 1996, p. 78).

**Analyzing Narrative Data**

Polkinghorne (1996) stated that analyzing narrative data cannot be achieved by a technical procedure. In order to grasp the significance, one must research with a “to-and-fro movement from part to whole and whole to part that produces the understanding of systematically organized expressions” (p. 98). The researcher develops an integrating story line that conveys the meaning of the happenings and actions of the subject’s life. In a sense, the researcher is creating a biography that gives interpretive meaning to the events of the subject’s life (p. 99). The role that the researcher plays in assisting someone else with their biography emulates their role in creating their own “autobiographical inquiry” (Cole and Knowles, 2000, p. 15).

**Narratives as Teaching Tools**

According to Randall (1996), using a “story approach” does have an implication to the therapeutic and ethical responsibility of educators. In current times, we focus on
meaning-making on an everyday basis. As we attempt to piece together the parts throughout our lives, we can participate in life review at any age.

Nina Jaffe (2000) described the role of storytelling in contemporary elementary education. Storytelling can be viewed as a tool that can help bridge the gap between reality and fantasy. Even though many young children are bombarded with story and narrative from exposure to radio, books, film, television and computer technology, it is believed by educators at Bank Street College, that children need the opportunity to formulate their own stories and recreate experiences. Children are encouraged to contribute to “group stories” so that images “can become active in the words of an artist and make the experience live again” (p. 171). This direct link from verbal storytelling to visualization is intriguing for use with an older population.

**Intergenerational Art Education**

I stated to several of the participants, “If you don’t tell these stories, younger generations will be missing out on important history.” If this project were taken a step further, there is great potential for linking older adults with children as they share their oral histories and create a memory collage collaboratively. Angela La Porte conducted a 7-month after-school intergenerational art program in Harlem, New York City. She discovered that “oral history dialogue between generations and cultures offers a potent pedagogical tool” (La Porte, 2000, p. 40). She developed a questioning strategy that would assist teenagers in talking with older adults about their lives. By taking a chronological approach to questions about their lives, La Porte believed that anxiety was
reduced for both the interviewer and the interviewee (p. 41). She also employed the use of historical artworks to encourage storytelling by asking the older adults to “place themselves in the picture” (p. 43).

The resulting product was a collage, but the educational objective of the project was focused more on the oral histories and how they enhanced textbook history for the high school students. It was not stated whether the memory collage was a collaborative effort, but this idea offers great potential for further understanding of history and an exchange in the artmaking process.

The Story of an Older Artist: Elizabeth Layton

The natural occurrence of life review can be in sync with visual thought processes. Elizabeth Layton is a recognized artist in the contemporary art world who depicted images inspired from her own process of life review. She did not begin drawing until she was 68-years old. She had suffered from 35 years of depression without gaining relief from shock treatments, drugs or therapy (Lambert and Soppelsa, 1994). Layton claimed that learning the technique of blind contour drawing as described in Nicolaides’ book, The Natural Way to Draw, cured her depression and saved her life. In a 1991 interview, Soppelsa and Lambert asked, “When did you realize your drawings were “something special”? She replied, “Three weeks into my first drawing class I realized that what I was doing had a purpose. I didn’t know what the purpose was at the time, but I realized that I must continue drawing, and I’m still drawing” (p. 55).
In her early works Layton depicted her personal life with portraits of herself and husband because they were available subjects. Her detailed drawings were evidence of the changes her aging body experienced. She put her “old age on view – unadorned” (Lambert, 1994, p. 55). She used humor to express potentially morbid themes. In “Pushing Up The Daisies” she portrayed herself lying at her gravesite with animals cheerfully gathered around her. She is holding on to some daisies that a child layed on her grave. One of the daisies outlines her winking eyelid, which Layton said conveys her knowing of the after world. This example supports the theory of integrative understanding because she was confronting her own mortality by portraying herself as a corpse (Kauppenin, 1988).

As her depression lessened, Layton’s work dealt more with social issues such as women’s rights, homelessness and AIDS using her same direct approach and technique that spared no details. For Elizabeth Layton, the process of life review provided her with images and ideas that inspired her artwork and appealed to a large audience.

The Collage Medium

A medium and process that should encourage participation from a group with a wide range of art experiences and abilities is collage. The technique of cutting, pasting and attaching items to pictures was used in both folk and traditional art (Fearing, Mayton, Francis & Beard, 1982). Folk art was usually simple and unpretentious, made by people who lacked formal training (Lipman & Winchester, 1977, p. 6). It is human nature to want to save items for sentimental reasons, such as scraps of fabric, a special button or an
old photograph. Often these items were pasted in the pages of a scrapbook or glued to a piece of paper. It was not until 1912, when Pablo Picasso began to combine painting with printed images to create a composition, that collage was considered a serious art form (Fearing, et al.). Since 1912, “every major artist has at one time or another employed collage – or the broader applications of ‘assembly’” (Kramer, 2000, p. 134).

Greenberg stated that using the medium of collage is less intimidating than other art materials (personal communication, January 28, 2000). Because the pictures already exist, the pressure to create specific imagery is removed i.e. drawing or painting. Making a collage requires selecting images to convey an idea or story. Satisfaction is attainable if the appropriate images are found and a pleasing composition is arranged.

Summary of Review of Literature

Pearl Greenberg stated in 1987, “Not everyone wants to, needs to, or ought to become involved with the arts, but latent talents do exist. Unless given the opportunity, they will never emerge” (p. 7). Elizabeth Layton’s experience was exceptional, and yet, instructing art to this age group could potentially provide a whole new dimension and purpose to living. At the very least, art education assists the participants in determining interests for further pursuit.

As the literature review suggests, the necessity of maintaining good mental health throughout our retirement years is increasingly important because of astronomical healthcare costs. Whether the elderly population will be an asset or burden to our society is a concern facing all of us.
The methodology of the Memory Collage Project and the quantitative analysis will be described and explained in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Organization of the Chapter

In this chapter, I will explain the development of the Memory Collage Project and my reasons for making certain instructional decisions as the project developed. Because I was both a teacher and researcher, my writing style may sound conversational at times. Since I was personally involved in every process, my self-reflection greatly affected my methodology.

Introduction

I approached this thesis project as the first of what I hope to be a series of art experiences for older adults. I promoted self-directed learning and encouraged community building throughout the process. Since the older adult is naturally reviewing their life experiences, the challenge for an art educator is to develop an experience that utilizes reminiscence and storytelling. By gleaning some information from the research of Donald Hoffman, Pearl Greenberg, Cynthia Taylor and Heta Kauppenin and others, I formulated a lesson plan (See Appendix C). It seems that there is a need to stimulate imagination while creating a vehicle for passing down history. For my thesis project, I will instruct older adults to reminisce and recall a memory from their life experience to depict in the collage medium.
My preparation, purpose and goals for the four visits to the church are described in detail. During my first visit, I introduced the idea of Memory Collage Project and stated the goals and instructions. The second visit was the actual production of the collage. I interviewed the participants individually during the third visit which gave me data for my quantitative analysis. And during my fourth visit, the memory collages were exhibited and presented to an audience. Please note the quantitative data analysis are included in the description of the third visit.

Cole and Knowles stated, "One of the most serious constraints to understanding and improving teaching (...) is the lack of time and opportunity to stand back and observe" (p. 89). This statement supports my reasoning for collecting data from videotape and cassette recordings, interviews, collage assessment and comments from assistants. I wanted as many opportunities for detailed observations as possible. As a teacher-researcher, I used a method called "autobiographical inquiry" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 15) that required me to reconstruct my teaching experience to identify repeating themes.

According to Cole and Knowles, "Teaching is an expression of who teachers are as people, that it is imbued with the beliefs, values, perspectives, and experiences developed over the course of a teacher’s lifetime" (p. 2). Working with elementary students for five years played a significant role on my teaching pedagogy. It was important for me to use that experience as a reference point when working with an older population.
According to Biklen (1992), qualitative research can help to improve a teacher's effectiveness. He stated, "Incorporating the qualitative perspective means nothing more than being self-conscious, actively thinking and acting in ways that a qualitative researcher does (p. 217). He also noted that the goal is to "understand the subjects' world and to determine how and with what criteria they judge it" (p. 219).

For this thesis study, I collected data for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Responses to interview questions informed my quantitative findings and the resulting frequency distributions are stated in this chapter. The qualitative findings are based on observations made from the actual collages, videotape footage, tape-recordings and comments from assistants. The qualitative analysis, which consists of a personal narrative, responses to research questions using coded data and five collage examples is discussed in Chapter 4.

The following five questions framed my research project:

1. What visual commonalities and differences would exist in the completed memory collages?
2. How would the elderly approach a project based on a memory?
3. What specific teaching strategies and types of motivation are effective with an older population?
4. How will I alter my current teaching pedagogy with elementary children to be effective with an older population?
5. Would older adults enjoy working on the Memory Collage Project?
The Participants

Four men and fourteen women participated in the Memory Collage Project. According to Lamdin (1997), this lopsided male/female ratio is common in adult learning. One reason for greater participation among females is the difference in life expectancy. Lamdin stated "Women outlive men by an average of seven years" (p. 67). The participants ranged in age from 62-years old to 94-years old. The 32-year difference from the youngest to the oldest, actually represents a range of two generations. The life experiences among the group must vary dramatically because of the events and economic times they have endured.

The group represented a range of economic backgrounds. Most of the participants had migrated to Tucson for their retirement years. Many of them came from the northeastern states. One reason Arizona is so popular among retirees, in addition to the climate, is that communities have been created to suit the needs of those in retirement. In 1995, Arizona was the second most popular destination in America for retirees (Kuhn & Hadjian, 1995).

Every member attended the meetings voluntarily, while some viewed their role as that of a volunteer or leader rather than a “regular” participant. Most people lived independently and were able to attend the meetings using their own transportation (including the 94-year old participant).

Before introducing the project, I visited the Director of Adult Ministry who developed and directed the weekly spiritual programs for the intact group that
participated in the Memory Collage Project. I explained that I wanted to lead a hands-on art experience with a group of older adults. I elaborated on my interest of using the process of life review as inspiration, and my need to videotape the process for my data collection. At that point, I was considering the possibility of an accordion book project. I also wondered what types of art experiences, if any, the group had participated in and what were realistic expectations of such a varied age group. She explained that this group was not interested in “making things”. In fact, some group members occasionally reminded her that they did not want to do any art activities. I was forewarned that there would be a few people that would refuse to participate, but would probably be content to watch the others.

The Director supported my ideas and felt that it was most important to figure out possible dates for the project that were compatible with the existing schedule of activities. We came up with a schedule that would permit me to visit the group on four consecutive Mondays so that there would be separate visits for the introduction, production, interviews and final exhibit.

I returned two weeks later with a proposal for the Memory Collage Project and began asking specific questions about the materials and facilities available. The Director was again supportive and enthusiastic about a project that would encourage the members to get to know others in the group. An activity that would allow the members to broaden their associations would strengthen their sense of community. We had talked over an hour when the group members started to arrive. We went to greet them as they entered
the auditorium. In between the various activities planned that day, I introduced myself to quite a few of the members. Immediately it became clear that everyone had a great deal of respect for the Director. She graciously introduced me to various people and with her endorsement they responded to me with immediate interest and acceptance.

**The Meeting Place**

This group meets at a beautiful “campus-like” church in the northwest part of Tucson. The meeting room is reminiscent of an auditorium, equipped with a stage. The production of the collages took place in an adjacent spacious “workroom” with carpeting and a room divider that eliminated distractions from the larger meeting room. Across the hall was an institutional-sized kitchen that exuded wonderful scents as lunch was prepared.

A couple days after I met with the Director, I met with two professional videographers. A media arts professor at the University of Arizona had recommended their services. They had previously worked together on a documentary about the elderly and took immediate interest in my project. Because I wanted to record the whole memory collage process, I requested that one videotape record my interactions with the participants, and the other capture the group dynamics. I also wanted the final art exhibition to be recorded. At that point, I was unsure of the status of a grant that I wrote asking for funds to help pay for the two videotapes, but it seemed like an invaluable way to record pertinent information for data collection. (Eventually, it was announced that I
received the grant from The University of Arizona Graduate Final Project Fund to pay for the videography.) As we discussed the project, their questions became specific to the environment where the project would be videotaped. I called the church to see if it was possible for us to visit that afternoon. Once we got permission, we drove out to examine the lighting and conditions for making sound recordings in several of the rooms. We had two choices for the site of the final exhibition, depending on the availability of the church "gallery".

The Memory Collage Example

The idea of making a memory collage seemed appropriate to me as an initial art project, but I know from my prior teaching experience that it was crucial to actually produce an example prior to introducing the project. I decided to ask my 72-year old neighbor if he would be willing to make a memory collage. He responded with interest and within a few minutes, knew exactly which memory he would illustrate in a collage.

He told me his story took place when he was ten years old. It was understood in his family that when mother would ring the bell you needed to arrive home within five minutes. One day, he was smoking and setting off some prized super-size caps with his friends, and it took him awhile to “hide” the evidence in his back pocket. By the time he arrived home, he was twenty minutes late and his mother was waiting for him with a whip. He knew he deserved the punishment, but as his mother gently swatted his behind with the whip, the super-size caps began to ignite in his back pocket and soon he began to
smolder. He raced around the room desperately trying to take his flaming pants off. The memory of the confusion and fear that resulted for both he and his mother has been remembered as a family joke ever since. He finished his story by titling it, “The Last Corporal Punishment”.

I asked him if he had any pictures that he could use in his collage. He said he had pictures of his mother and himself from “around that time”, but they were in a photo album. I assured him that I would xerox the pictures so his originals would not be harmed. Later that week, he came to my house and we discussed the importance of composition. He decided that the copies of the photos of his mother and himself were most important and he would make them the focal point by placing them in the left central corner. He combined the xeroxed photos with magazine pictures of an arm (to represent his mother’s) and a man bending over. He added a small strip of leather for a whip and a denim pocket from a pair of his old jeans (which he retrieved from his house) and arranged these images to illustrate the whipping scene. He requested some red paper to add the final touch. He drew a grid and dots to represent the oversized caps and put them in the back pocket. (See Figure 1, p. 48)

VISIT 1: Introduction and Instruction of the Memory Collage Project

The following Monday, I attended the group meeting. Right before the noon meal, I was asked to introduce myself and stand before the group at a podium with a microphone. I explained that I was a graduate student in Art Education at the University
of Arizona and my particular interest was working with older adults. I told them that I had an idea for an art project that would let them get to know each other better. I asked everyone to think of a story from their life experience that they would like to record on a tape and represent in a collage. I promised that both the tape and the collage would be theirs to keep. I showed them my neighbor's collage and played the tape recording of his humorous story based on his childhood memory. The audience chuckled in response to his recorded tale. I referred to his example and pointed out how he had arranged his pictures in an interesting composition and chose to use a variety of materials, such as the pocket from his jeans to create interest and express his idea. I restated the importance of having the right images to tell the story. I explained that if they found photos and memorabilia during the next week, we could make copies of them so the original would not be harmed.

I shared the collage artwork of: Romare Bearden, Miriam Shapiro and Henri Matisse. I hoped that seeing those examples and understanding the immediacy and simplicity of the technique would be inviting to those who had not worked artistically in many years, while still providing challenge to everyone.

I felt uncomfortable standing at the podium. The rapport I had developed with several of the group members seemed irrelevant in such a formal “lecture” arrangement. In my elementary artroom, I invite the children to sit near me. This creates an intimate, comfortable learning environment and small visuals can be passed around the room so
that everyone is able to see them up close. As I spoke, I knew many people were feeling uncomfortable, but it was my only chance to get the project initiated.

One woman said she refused to get her voice recorded on tape because she sounded like a little girl. Another person said she had no stories to tell. And another woman told us that she had University of Arizona yearbooks from 1950. She began to describe the yearbook pictures in great detail but when I asked her how she would use the yearbooks for her collage, she did not answer, but instead continued to ramble.

Since I intended to videotape the production and exhibition for data collection, I explained that the University of Arizona requires all participants to sign a human subjects approval form before we could begin the project. I explained the necessity of their signature and the routine nature of the document. When I left that day, I had only seven human subjects approval forms signed and a sunken heart. My intuition told me to stop after the project introduction, but I felt the University of Arizona’s protocol with human subjects approval was a necessary step before I could proceed further. I doubted that I would be able to get many of these people to participate in the project.

I had prepared a flyer with the heading: "What is Your Story?" (See Appendix A) I wanted this to act as a reminder about the project and to encourage reminiscing before the next meeting. I listed suggestions of items to bring in the next week, including photographs, fabric, newspaper clippings and buttons that would make the collage project fun and clearly explain their story. I passed these out, hoping for the best.
FIGURE 1: The Memory Collage example
In an effort to feel better about my actions, I e-mailed Dr. Pearl Greenberg, an advocate of lifelong learning, with whom I had developed friendly correspondence. I asked how she dealt with resistance from older adults during her teaching experiences. I also mentioned that I was used to a high level of enthusiasm from working with elementary students. Her response did little to assure me that I was on the right track.

Jenny, how well do these folks know you? It appears that there is not yet any real trust from what you describe. Unless they trust you they may not want to do what you are suggesting! (…) Of course responses will not be like the children respond! Until they feel at ease in the situation, why should they? They might be feeling used, frankly!!! You are already talking about an exhibition and they have not even decided if they want to be bothered with this stuff…I'd pull back, frankly as you are assuming they are your captives and they want you to know that they are NOT!!! (…) Sorry to be so direct, but you may have started off on the so-called wrong foot…move back a bit and see what you can do to save the situation…get them with you and then things might work. Right now, it doesn’t seem that they are with you at all!!! (personal communication, March 1, 2000)
VISIT 2: Production of the Memory Collages

I contacted the four graduate students that volunteered to assist with the actual production of the memory collages. In reaction to my first visit, I tried to prepare them for a resistant group and suggested that they let the older adults do most of the initiating.

We arrived a couple hours early on the production day to set up the room. I displayed a reproduction of a collage titled, *Pittsburgh Memories*, made by Romare Bearden in 1984. This work was based on his memories of living in Pittsburgh in the 1940s. Bearden was able to express his own past and his deep appreciation of the ritualistic aspects of everyday life. The collage represented the interior of a home using warm collage materials in contrast to the exterior that looked cold and industrial. I also displayed reproductions of Henri Matisse's papercuts and my neighbor's memory collage.

(Please refer to The Memory Collage Project Lesson Plan in Appendix B)

Figure 2 on page 51 shows members of the group at work on their memory collages.

The worktables were arranged in a large U-shape to be accessible to participants as well as the videographers. Chairs were placed on both sides of the tables allowing for conversation among the participants. Each long worktable was stocked with glue sticks, scissors and stacks of *Life* magazines from the 50s and 60s. Other materials, like the mat board for mounting the items and maps were placed on a central table. Five tape recorders were set on tables against the back wall for “private” storytelling.
FIGURE 2: Participants working on their collages
Many people came in with photos ready to be copied and scrapbooks for reference. C.R. had printed some computer-generated images for his collage and D.O.B. had made a three-dimensional object (a miniature mop made from a pencil and yarn) to attach to her collage. There was a sense of determination in the air, as the members found their way to the worktables. Without hesitation, the memory collage production began. Several minutes into the project, I pointed out the University of Arizona volunteers and the materials available and offered our assistance whenever it was needed.

I spoke with individuals about their stories and their selection of images. My specific interactions are described in my personal narrative in Chapter 4. The volunteers were interacting in a similar manner - making suggestions to the participants and helping them locate specific imagery. By the end of the hour-long session, nearly everyone had completed their collage and those that wished to tape-record their story, had the opportunity.

VISIT 3: Interviewing the Participants

Quantitative Analysis of Data

For my data collection and analysis, I created an “autobiographical inquiry” (Cole and Knowles, 2000, p. 15). By reconstructing my life experience as a teacher-researcher, I am able to identify repeating themes. The Memory Collage Project is asking eighteen participants to do the same personal inquiry. Even though the resulting product is different for each of us, we experienced a similar process by participating in the project.
During my third visit, I asked the participants to meet with me privately so I could ask them these questions:

1. Have you had any art training since elementary school?
2. Did you enjoy working on the memory collage? If so, what part did you enjoy the most?
3. Did you complete your memory collage?
4. Did you have a vision of what you were trying to achieve?
5. Did the instructor do anything to help you enjoy the project? If so, what?
6. Is there anything you wish the instructor had done differently? If so, what?
7. Was the process of using a story from your life more interesting than using a different subject?
8. Did talking with the instructor or others help you focus on your project idea?
9. Are you looking forward to sharing your collage and tape with someone?

The nine questions required a “yes/no” response, which allowed frequency distributions to be calculated. I recorded their descriptive answers verbatim and calculated frequency distributions for those as well.

The first question asked if they had had any art training since elementary school. Ten people said they had not taken any art classes since elementary school. Three people took college level art courses and five had taken some kind of art class as a “senior”.
The second question asked if they enjoyed working on the memory collage. Eighty-nine percent did enjoy working on the memory collage and eleven percent somewhat enjoyed working on it. The most popular response to "What part did you enjoy most?" was "remembering or recollecting" (33%). Other responses included "planning and coordinating the idea" (16%), "going through the magazines" (16%) and "seeing everyone else engaged in the project" (16%).

Question 3 asked if they completed their memory collage, seventy-eight percent said they did complete their memory collage and twenty-two percent did not. I asked if they had a vision of what they were trying to achieve in Question 4. Twenty-eight percent did have a vision of what they were trying to achieve, eleven percent somewhat had a vision and sixty-one percent did not have a vision of what they were trying to achieve.

The response to the Question 5 was that sixty-seven percent thought that the instructor did do something to help them enjoy the project, twenty-eight percent thought she did not do something to help them enjoy it and five percent did not respond.

Of those that responded "yes", twenty-eight percent thought there was "a good explanation of the project" and twenty-two percent thought that "getting the group together" helped them to enjoy the project. Other responses included "enthusiasm, moral support and friendly – not business-like".

Question 6 asked if there was anything they wished the instructor had done differently. Fifty-six percent wished the instructor had done something differently and forty-four percent were satisfied with the way the instructor had done things. Of those that made suggestions for improvement, twenty-two percent wished they had
more time to create the collage, and seventeen percent wished there had been a bigger selection of pictures to use.

When asked if the process of using a story from their lives was more interesting than using a different subject in Question 7, eighty-three percent thought that the process was more interesting than using a different subject, six percent thought it did not matter and eleven percent could not respond.

Question 8 asked if talking with the instructor or others helped them to focus on their project idea. Sixty-one percent thought that talking with someone helped them focus on their project, twenty-eight percent thought that talking did not help them to focus and for eleven percent is was not applicable.

Participants were asked if they had thought about sharing their collage and tape recording with someone in Question 9. Sixty-seven percent were looking forward to sharing their collage and tape with someone, twenty-eight percent were not interested in sharing their collage and tape and for five percent the question was not applicable.

VISIT 4: The Exhibition of the Memory Collages

For the culminating event, I displayed all of the memory collages in the room where they were created. I watched as the participants found their own collage and stood back to admire it. Visitors were determined to find the collages made by their friends and enthusiastically made comments while viewing the exhibit. They were obviously aware of the story depicted and responded to the images chosen with delight. After viewing the artworks, everyone was asked to sit in the audience for a short presentation. I expressed
my thanks to everyone that participated and commented that one of the most enjoyable parts of the project, for me, was that I got to know everyone through their stories.

Before the presentation began, I had asked four different people if they would be interested in sharing their collages. To my surprise, they all enthusiastically agreed to do that. (I was surprised because two of the four were hesitant to have their voices recorded at the earlier session.) I suggested that each artist tell us their story and describe their selection process for the images. Our time was limited, so the participants chose to tell their story rather than “explain” their artwork. However, as the stories were told, the artwork acted as a way of organizing thoughts. This was evident by the way in which the artists pointed to certain images and described the pictures they had selected. The response to the stories and the general sense of sharing and community was incredibly positive. The exhibition ended with a participant’s question: “Can we do this again?”

**Data Collection**

The “yes/no” responses to the interview questions were used to tabulate frequency distributions for quantitative analysis. For qualitative analysis, I used a triangulated method of collecting data for twelve participants. First, the formal qualities of the collages were described by subject, materials, composition and design. Second, the content of their narrative story was summarized. Next, my instructional interactions and strategies were recorded. Then, the origin of the imagery the participant used in their collage was described. By coding this information, it is possible to identify
commonalities and differences between the various experiences of the participants. After analyzing this information, I was able to comprehensively answer my research questions.

One videographer recorded my instruction and personal interactions throughout the entire collage production as well as the final art exhibit. The second videotape provided a record of interactions between the participants and the volunteer assistants. Additionally, this second videographer recorded overall group dynamics by working from wide shots. By carefully observing and recording observations from both videotapes, I coded interactions, behaviors and conversations in description format for twelve participants.

Below is an example of the coding chart I developed to analyze the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>COLLAGE DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ORAL NARRATIVE</th>
<th>MY INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>IMAGES USED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See the next page for an example of the qualitative data coding.)

(See Appendix C for the completed coding charts.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>COLLAGE DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ORAL NARRATIVE</th>
<th>MY INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>IMAGES USED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>All transportation images (motorcycles, Marlboro man on horse, car, boat) images overlapped and extended off board. Some were obviously cut out by assistant, but others she cut out in rough rectangular format.</td>
<td>FAMILY - Positive memory of children and life in different parts of the country. Daughters with boyfriends on motorcycles. Her own motorcycle riding adventure. Children giving thanks for horseback riding lessons because they were necessary for transportation in Alaska. An overflow of seemingly scattered ideas that she pieced together under the theme of transportation from different time periods.</td>
<td>Before starting the project, she described a different story of growing up in Hungary with poppies and fish biting legs. Did video interview to please me and be helpful. She also stated that she could explain these images better (to me).</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - no. Because she could not find any pictures to portray her original idea, she was inspired by pictures she found of transportation. Those determined different stories about transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.D.</td>
<td>Care not taken in cutting and placement. 3 key images chosen to tell story: map, tire and fish. Video showed Bruce placing tire picture on matboard for him.</td>
<td>FRIENDS - Reconnected with old friend from working years. Worked at Firestone in Akron, Ohio, reunion after 50 years. Friend had picture of them in Canada on fishing trip. John did not remember catching the fish he was holding in picture. Tone of voice sounded like a Garrison Keillor natural. Seemed to enjoy telling the story.</td>
<td>I introduced the project to him individually. Said he was not sure what to do, but did not want to see examples. He already had an idea and was hoping to find pictures to tell that story. Came in to support me via director's request.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - no. Big Firestone ad in Life magazine, fish and map to show where in Canada they went fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C.</td>
<td>No overlap. Individual items carefully placed (eggs, chick, rooster, map and farm scene). Strong craftsmanship/order. Variety of image sizes. Vivid yellow corn and chicks are focal point.</td>
<td>FAMILY - Her contribution to family. Life on a farm in Kansas. One of 8 children. Described her first “job” collecting the eggs and feeding the chickens. Voice indicated a sense of pride in her accomplishment. Uncomfortable tone and pauses in storytelling.</td>
<td>I did not interact with her during the project. Volunteer assistant helped her find images and made suggestions for arrangement. Same assistant listened while she made recording. Bond.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - some. According to volunteer assistant, she bought corn product at grocery so she would have the packaging for collage project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.O.</td>
<td>Used many repetitive images of b/w Xeroxes of trip and glued to 2 black boards. Added xeroxed poem about the place they visited. Carefully cut, glued and arranged. “Scrapbook style”</td>
<td>FRIENDS - Taking risk. Conservative upbringing. First trip without family. Went to a camp 150 miles from home with “girlfriends from the office”. Shocked mother with suntan when she returned.</td>
<td>Very upright. Had definite vision of outcome she wanted and would not settle for anything less. Enjoyed using pictures of herself and pointed out which figure was her in each picture.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - yes. Brought in numerous photos to get xeroxed. Were not to her specifications, so assistant made new copies. Seemed to already have an arrangement in mind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first category, labeled “Person” gives the initials of the participant and states their gender. The second category, labeled “Collage Description” is a description of the actual memory collage. The subject matter, color and composition of the imagery and text are described. If the participant used overlapping, extended off the board or showed exceptional craftsmanship or a lack of craftsmanship, this was noted.

The third category, labeled “Oral Narrative” is a summary of the narrative story as heard from the tape-recording. The key points are listed, including subject, activity, time of life, whether it was positive or negative in nature and the style of speaking. The fourth category labeled “My Instruction” refers to my personal interactions with that person.

The fifth category is labeled “Images Used”. If they had a story in mind, it is coded “Idea-yes”. If they had no story in mind before the production day, it is coded “Idea-no”. If they brought in photos, color xeroxes or another item, it is coded “Image-yes”, etc. The participants’ outside preparation and investment played a role in the actual production of the memory collage, so this is described.

Qualitative Analysis of Data

The first necessary task for qualitative data analysis was to record my interactions and instruction from the videotape footage for the duration of the actual collage production. This personal narrative is included in the beginning of Chapter 4. Five collages and the oral narratives that inspired their creation are coded in a chart (Appendix
D). The five oral narratives were transcribed from the tape-recorded stories. They are included in their entirety in Appendix E. Using this information in conjunction with the other coded observation charts (Appendix C), I was able to address my research questions.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Organization of Chapter

This chapter discusses the qualitative results of this thesis study. First, as a teacher-researcher, I described the videotape footage in a personal narrative and then I analyzed my interactions and teaching strategies. Eighteen participants were interviewed for the quantitative analysis, but I had complete information for only 12 participants. I created two coding charts for organizing my qualitative analysis. The first, (Appendix C) describes the collage, narrative, my instruction and the origin of the images used for the 12 participants. The second coded chart, (Appendix D) is a more detailed analysis of the relationship of the oral narrative to the visual collage for five of the participants. Using this information and the quantitative data, the research questions are discussed in the final section of the qualitative analysis.

The Production of the Memory Collage: A Personal Narrative

Introduction

The following observations are important in my role as teacher-researcher, which is the form of inquiry best suited to analyzing one's own instruction. Usually I do not have the ability to be objective about my interactions because of the pace and simultaneous interactions I have with different students. I usually leave my workday with a sense of relief and exhaustion that seems to obliterate my specific memories. The
videotape provided me with concrete examples of my behavior that I could repeatedly observe. For this reason, the videotape is valuable for observation, record and future practice.

Production of the Memory Collage

People entered into the workroom at a very slow pace. I greeted them and invited them to choose a seat wherever they would like. It took about four minutes to get everyone settled in a seat. I looked around the room and noticed that the noise level was reminiscent of an artroom filled with first-graders that were completely engrossed in a project. Although it was exciting to sense that kind of energy, it made me feel helpless as an instructor. I waited for a lull so that I could get everyone’s attention. When I realized that was not going to happen, I began speaking over their voices. I explained that we (the assistants and myself) were there to help them in any way we could and that certain materials, such as maps, matboard, etc. were available on the central table. My plan to discuss composition and re-examine my neighbor’s example was disregarded, as I felt completely ignored. None of the participants even turned in their seats to look at me when I spoke. They had a mission and they had begun.

Had I been teaching an elementary group, I would have demanded their attention. I could not think of a way to be authoritative without also being disrespectful. Had I known there would be so much commotion, I would not have set the materials out in advance. I expected more restraint and respect from the older adults, but I was thankful that I had at least mentioned some very general considerations about composition and selection of images during my previous visit. On the other hand, if the materials had not
been distributed at the worktables, the five minutes that it took people to find their seats, would have been used differently. Would they have discussed their ideas with their neighbors? Would they have become frustrated and bored because they already had specific ideas and this was “wasting time”?

My first “one-on-one” interaction was with a man who had been asked to attend this meeting specifically to do the memory collage. Even though the Director of Older Adult Ministry had already explained the project to him personally, he still wanted to hear me state the goals and steps of the process. After I briefly explained that he was going to recall a memory to illustrate in the collage, I started to walk away to get my neighbor’s example. He stopped me and said he did not need to see an example.

Then he asked, “How do you go about this? - Just start looking through magazines?”

“You could,” I responded.

Before I could continue, he asked, “Should I start with the map and go from there?”

I was able to find a map of Canada for him that was the setting for his memory, so I left this man to continue working on his own. I felt unsure of the adequacy of his understanding of the project and yet, his demeanor seemed confident and he was working, so I moved to another table.

A couple was silently looking through magazines. I thought I was being helpful by showing them some pictures of the Bahamas. In fact, I had confused this couple with another couple and they probably had no idea why I was trying to show them pictures of
the beach. The man mentioned that his job was “just to try to help her”. I jokingly made a comment to him about how she seemed to be calling “all the shots”.

He said, “She’s been doing it for nearly 60 years!”

We chuckled about that. Throughout this verbal exchange, the woman did not look up from her magazine. This comment may have totally alienated her. They did not actually make a collage. This interaction may have been detrimental to their participation in the project. When I interviewed the man the following week, he said she did not feel well enough to continue working on it, so he did not push her. Tears formed in his eyes as he described how he worries about her and does not know what he will do without her.

The videotape picked up the voice of a volunteer assistant as he interacted with several of the participants. He held my neighbor’s collage and briefly described his childhood story. He pointed out each picture and they discussed the arrangement and how it conveyed his idea. The volunteer’s voice was loud and he took charge of the group.

Another volunteer assistant had previously found a picture of a star galaxy in one of the Life magazines while assisting several women. One of the women waited until this assistant actually walked by, to ask if she remembered where she had seen the galaxy picture. There was clearly a “bond” between the participant and assistant and a rapport developed merely by looking for images together. I presume that the participant’s limited energy prevented her from approaching the volunteer sooner.

The videotape captured the work habits of the participants as they searched for their imagery and arranged them on their matboards. Many of the participants had a
serious expression on their faces; their hand movements and cutting were deliberate and some appear to be awkward. For some, the project appears to be an assignment, with pressure to fulfill the requirements. Other people seem to be working freely and enjoy an occasional interruption by another participant (questioning their story, asking if they had come across a picture of a certain subject, etc.).

Because we had only one hour to complete the collages and make the tape recordings, I found it necessary to interrupt at times. Tape-recording sessions needed to be staggered throughout the hour, so that everyone would get a chance to make one. I was definitely aware that I was stopping the flow of work, so I apologetically asked C.C. to make her recording and then return to her collage. She was completely engrossed and very reluctantly left her collage to record her story.

I said to one of the volunteer assistants, “People are fine recording by themselves”. She acknowledged what I said, but walked away without a clue about the meaning of this statement. What I was really thinking is, “Once you get them recording, you can work with people that are making their collage and that is where I think your energy would be better spent.” That word choice would have stated specifically what I wanted and why. What I said, suggested that she did not need to sit with each participant as he or she made a recording, but did not offer a reason or alternative, either.

Although the videographers were non-intrusive, there is evidence that one participant was aware that he was being photographed. He made a subtle gesture with his arms as if hoping to hide from the camera. (This man and his wife were the couple that did not actually make a collage.)
My next interaction involved a seemingly reluctant participant, M.D. Her memory collage was complete and I asked if she was ready to make a tape-recording. I ended up pleading with her until she agreed to do it. She gave in when I explained that she would get to keep the tape cassette. In my effort to persuade her, I decided that she would be more comfortable if I brought the tape recorder to her. The distance to the recording area seemed prohibitive because she used a walker. This may not have been a factor for her reluctance, but I created more work for myself when I retrieved the recorder. I had to hold the cumbersome equipment close to her mouth so the microphone could pick up her voice. Watching the almost comical arrangement I created, I realize that exerting this effort was probably unnecessary for her comfort.

The reason this participant hesitated about the tape recording is that she felt self-conscious about hearing her voice recorded. M.D. announced, “I’ll make too many mistakes!”

She seemed to accept my comment, “You have to be kinder to yourself because if you recorded your story 20 times you couldn’t come up with something as good as that!” She asked who would keep the collage. I explained that she would, after we displayed them.

She said, “If I made too many mistakes, I don’t want everyone to see it.”

This participant seemed to be very concerned about doing a good job on both the collage and her oral recording. Interestingly enough, her recording and later, her public storytelling, seemed most casual and confident. M.D. was introverted until given the chance to share and then that inhibition seemed to disappear.
With only 15 minutes left for the collage making process, I visited a table with a 94 year-old male participant, C.W. In his British accent he stated, “I haven’t given it much thought. If it were just one item, I wouldn’t know what to pick. What is it that you want of me? There have been so many things, I don’t know where to begin. How much time is given to each thing? If it were just one item, I won’t know what to pick. You see I’ve done this… I’ve been in charge of groups, but I’ve not put myself in the picture.”

I was not given a chance to respond between questions, so finally I acknowledge his comment by stating, “So you’re used to being the leader and not the participant.”

He looked up at me and asked, “What do you do, how are you connected to this?”

I explained that I was a graduate student in Art Education at the University of Arizona and that I was especially interested in working with older adults because “you’ve got incredible life experiences to pull from”.

C.W. interjected, “That’s where you get the history.”

He explained that he had been in charge of groups for the BBC, but never put himself in the picture. I felt certain that this bit of information was to impress on me that he was a leader and not a follower. The two people working on the other side of the table began to show interest in our conversation. I had just said, “Unless your stories are told, people won’t know about them, whether it be your own family or even strangers.”

He asserted himself and asked those people, “Will you excuse me for just a moment?” The expressions on their faces showed their shocked reaction. Shock briefly registered on my face as well. C.W. did not want them to intervene in any way so he could have my devoted attention to elaborate on his life history.
He began, "For instance, I was the Chairman of the London Forum...the question is what is the London Forum?" He continued, "It is made up of retired professionals, mostly teachers, managers, police executives and so on, and we extended that into running classes at schools in various areas. We found out just what you are finding out here...about the lives and how these people have lived them...We published their life stories once a month and that book took me to the House of Parliament. I was a guest of the National Prime Minister and went to a private tea with the Lord Maid of London. Now, I don't know where to start."

Interjecting at the first opportunity, I stated, "You mentioned this last week. This is very important to you."

He replied, "It isn't just that I was invited to the tea, the point is what is the story behind it?"

Hoping to offer some kind of focus to the project, I suggested, "Maybe you would tell us the story that leads up to the tea, but your collage may show just the tea. That's why we have the visual medium as well as the oral medium because there's no way that any picture can represent your whole experience.

He begins to tell another story, this one from his childhood. C.W. began, "Every child has some excitement in his life. Part of mine was because my mother was a midwife in a mining village. I was the eldest. She would be busy bringing babies into the world and then someone would come to our house announcing, "The baby is coming!'"
I looked down on the worktable and noticed several bicycle images, so I interjected, “And you were the messenger!” He had saved his pennies to buy an old bicycle. If someone came to his house telling him a baby was on the way, it was his responsibility to notify his mother. He summarized the importance of this memory in historical context, “When you relate today’s procedure to what it was then….”

It was clear that the woman sitting beside this man had found those images for him, yet he had made no effort to cut them out. I attempt to relate the gathered bicycle images to this story, but it is not effective. When I acknowledged their teamwork, they both briefly chuckled, but C.W. started getting up to make his tape-recording in the back of the room.

Without hesitation, he told his chronological life story with great care and eloquence. Long after the other participants had gone back to the auditorium to eat lunch, he still sat huddled over his cane, speaking clearly into the microphone.

As I peruse the room, I shout over the hum, “Please be sure to sign your collage, preferably on the front!” No one looks at me to acknowledge my directions.

I finally got a chance to peek over B.A.’s shoulder. I had spoken with her before the production and she had vividly described the time she lived in Hungary and her memories of fields filled with beautiful orange poppies. She also talked about wading in the water when fish nibbled at her feet in Budapest.

I was surprised to see her nearly finished collage, filled with images of motorcycles, horses and a ship. I said, “Oh my goodness, this is so cool! You decided not to do your memories of Hungary?” I questioned.
She responded, “Yes, I did. Well, I got started on this and then this developed.”

I felt pulled away from her, because C.R. was waiting to record his story. I asked him if he would feel comfortable recording by himself, in hopes that I could continue my conversation with B.A. He told me that he would prefer it if I would sit with him because I might ask him questions about things that he would forget.

He asked, “Should I describe what I’ve got here?”

I answer, “That’s one approach, or you could tell us a specific story, it is up to you.”

He said, “I can go into great detail on everything I’ve got here.”

“It seems that since you’ve got this finished collage it might be great to use it as a tool”, I reply.

He proceeded to describe the color-xeroxed images he had used of cars he had worked on in the automotive industry. He also designed Christmas cards each year since 1976, and had included several examples of those illustrations. He spoke quickly and descriptively in a monotone voice. I was distracted by people around me and acutely aware that I had deserted B.A. His voice started to crescendo at the end, but I missed my cue. Immediately, I realized that he awaited my response and I was definitely not paying attention. I got a chance to redeem myself when he continued to describe the greeting cards. He said he had hidden a drawing of a mouse and asked if I could find it. I attentively responded and he seemed satisfied. He also asked, “How was that?” (referring to his storytelling).

I respond, “Wonderful.” He clearly was trying to please me.
I looked for B.A., but she had gone to the bathroom. Many people had finished their collage and tape recording and were filing into the auditorium for lunch. As soon as she returned, I asked if she would let me interview her about her collage. She willingly agreed, so we arranged ourselves in front of the video camera and I held her collage so she could see it.

(Please refer to B.A.'s collage, Figure 3, p. 78)

The interview began. I commented, “Before we started our art session, you were telling me about a story from your childhood about coming over to this country from Hungary. Then when I saw your collage later, there weren’t pictures from Hungary. Can you tell me what happened?”

Her first response was, “I don’t know.” But then she continued, “I thought you might be more pleased with this, because I could explain it. These pictures are apropos of all the transportation we had. I worked in Hawaii for five years, so I had the planes. My daughter’s boyfriend had a motorcycle and they dared me to ride it. So I did, and nothing happened!”

“By yourself?” I asked.

“Yes”, she responded.

“Wow, I’m impressed”, I said with a grin.

“This is life in Arizona”…she remarked as she pointed to a car… “And this is when Kathy went to Alaska. She told me when she came back it was a good thing I’d given her horseback riding lessons, ‘cause when she got to Alaska there was no other way. You were on foot in ice and snow.”
Figure 3: B.A.'s collage
She pointed at the picture on her collage and continued, “This would be part of Hawaii. One time we went by ship. There was some kind of trouble in the boiler room and the Coast Guard had to come and take us two by two and four by four, because that ship couldn’t go anywhere.” Again, she mentioned that her daughter had called her to thank her for giving her horseback riding lessons when she was young because she sure needed them in Alaska.

“When you were looking through magazines and spotted a picture that prompted a memory, you chose that one?” I asked.

“Yes, I decided that would come forth because I couldn’t find anything about Hungary or poppies.”

I explained how surprised I was to see her collage after our initial conversation because her descriptions were so vivid. I added, “Because you are such a great storyteller.”

She responded, “You become a great storyteller when you have children.”

This comment did not register with me, because if it had, I would have encouraged her to say more about her storytelling experiences.

Analyzing the Narrative

Because materials were arranged on tables, and an explanation was given in advance, there was great fervor and energy exhibited that I did not anticipate. Expecting a more hesitant and reluctant group, I was surprised that their voices did not hush when I began to speak. In my elementary classroom, I would have expected an explosive
outcome if the room was "set-up" in this manner, but from older adults, I expected more restraint and respect. Yet, their enthusiasm indicated their desire to participate. There did not seem to be any negative consequences for their disinterest in my directions. Everyone seemed self-directed and those who had questions received "one-on-one" attention.

The first participant I spoke with did have several questions about the project. Although he said he was unsure of what was expected, his responses indicated that he did not want any special demonstrations or unnecessary explanations. For example, when I set off to get the collage example, he called me back because he "had the idea". This behavior is not unlike that of any person in an unfamiliar situation that does not want to appear naïve or uninformed.

It is obvious in reviewing the videotape footage that the couple silently working would have been better off without my interruption. They were not seeking my assistance. Since I interjected with baffling ideas about the beach (I confused them with another couple that had gone to the Bahamas on their 50th Anniversary), I felt that my interaction was exceptionally damaging. I will not know how much that interaction affected their enjoyment of the project, for sure, but I do feel it had a negative impact.

The assistance of the volunteers in this project was crucial. All four volunteers contributed to the success of the project. Regardless of the age group one is working with, it is very important to inform volunteer assistants about what you expect. Sometimes, my efforts to be tactful created confusion because I was not straightforward about my expectations. Because working with an older population requires a great deal
of flexibility, I felt it was important to encourage that in my assistants. The volunteers were definitely flexible and sensitive to the needs and boundaries expressed by the participants.

I went to great lengths to convince M.D. to record her story. She completed her minimal collage quickly and seemed very reluctant to record the corresponding story. The video exposed me pleading with her to record her story. I was successful with that technique and realized after some time that less effort may have gotten the same results. This participant seemed self-conscious about the public “display” of her artwork and made a recording with extreme hesitation, but once engaged, was able to relax and enjoy herself. I think people, in general, are uncomfortable with recording their voices, but there seemed to be little hesitation among the participants as a whole.

C.W., who reiterated his life story to me clearly responded to the concept of using his life review for an activity. My efforts to hone in on one particular story or memory were not successful, however. Even the assistance of his peers did not help him create a collage. For this participant, having an outlet to express his life story was the gainful activity. This experience was obviously important to him and he implied in his interview that making the recording was his project goal.

Even though I was tired at the end of the production, I was looking forward to taking a closer look at the collages that transpired from the lesson. The notion of providing a closing statement went through my head, but I immediately disregarded it because people were trickling out of the room and commenting seemed inappropriate.
Discussion of Research Questions

Question 1: What visual commonalities and differences would exist in the completed memory collages?

By analyzing the coded data about the formal qualities of each collage by subject, materials, composition and design elements, there are definite similarities between the collages in all of these categories. Since the most popular topic for the narrative was "family", there was a visual connectedness in the use of portrait photographs. Some even found magazine pictures of people that resembled them. Both C.C. (Figure 4, p. 76) and D.O.B. (Figure 5, p. 77) included actual photographs of themselves. R.C. (Figure 6, p. 78) found a picture of a girl in a magazine to represent her. Of the five collages that are coded in detail, two are about "family", two are about "childhood" and one is about "career".

Next, I wanted to examine the similarities and differences in their compositions. C.R. (Figure 7, p. 79) filled most of the matboard, and took great care to allow equal amounts of negative space to frame each image. Most collages have symmetrical balance in color, as well as imagery. Even when images vary in size, there is still concern for balance. (See R.C.'s collage, Figure 6, p. 78)

I developed my own term to describe the most common method for arranging the images. I will call it "scrapbook style". This approach involves locating pictures that
Figure 4: C.C.'s collage
Figure 5: D.O.B.'s collage
Figure 7: C.R.'s collage
Figure 8: M.D.'s collage
represent the key elements of the stories and then mounting them on the matboard. Pictures are placed in a pleasing order, with an emphasis on balance. Labeling was a popular way to reference the story. For example, D.O.B., whose collage portrayed her wetting her pants in first grade, used labeling under a picture of a little girl that stated "me crying". (See Figure 5, p. 84) Usually the labels were handwritten. C.C. also used labeling, but incorporated printed words from magazines with her own handwriting. (See Figure 4, p.83) It is interesting to note that the three collages made by male participants did not have any labeling.

With the exception of the collage made by C.C., who allowed her photos and other collaged items to be placed at angles, all images were pasted squarely on the matboard, as if on a grid. C.C. also overlapped shapes creating interest and some sense of depth. B.A. was the only participant who allowed the materials to extend off the edge of the matboard. (See Figure 3, p.78) Her images are not arranged in "scrapbook-style". I know from talking with her, that she basically just "wanted to get them on there", so the resulting collage is more of a congregation of images and actually appears more collage-like. M.D.'s collage (Figure 8, p. 87) consists of three black and white photographs she found in a *Life* magazine. The varying perspectives and the simple black and white images cut into oval-like forms convey a postmodern style.

Looking back at my neighbor's collage (Figure 1, p. 54), I understand how this example may suggest and model a "scrapbook-style" arrangement. However, I think the reason that so many participants mounted pictures, was their desire for a literal visual story. Using realistic images in a straightforward way supports Hoffman's observations.
that most older adults feel more comfortable with realistic images. Those that have not been exposed to other possibilities for creating more interesting compositions, are probably not going to deviate from a tried and true method. The next art experience I would instruct to this group, would confront the "scrapbook-style" approach, examine historical approaches to collage and encourage other possibilities for future assignments.

Question 2: **How would the elderly approach a project based on a memory?**

Most of the participants attended the meeting that included my introduction. After I explained the objectives of the project, I asked them to think of a memory or story that they would like to share with someone. They had a week to reminisce and develop their project idea as well as gather materials to use. Most participants had a clearly developed idea before coming to the production session.

First, I will examine the oral narratives that were chosen for the Memory Collage Project. Four content areas were described in the 12 narratives. Six participants told stories about "family", three about "career", two about "friends" and one about "childhood". Nine were stories about positive events and were presented in an upbeat manner and two described negative events, but were both presented with humor. There was no evidence of unresolved issues or apparent frustration with these past events and the process of life review.

By coding my interactions with each participant, I became aware of the variety of life experiences chosen for representation. Some were incidents or events, such as C.C.'s
story about the afternoon her family went to a Mexican family’s home and she learned how to make tortillas. She chose to describe an extraordinary event that left an impression on her whole family. Others chose to represent a span of several years that had a common theme. For example, R.C. described and illustrated her role caring for the chickens on the farm. Another approach was to account for a whole life history. C.R. summarized his entire career life working in the automotive and airplane industry, and later his artistic achievements designing Christmas cards.

The coding reveals an obvious gender difference in the themes chosen for this project. Three of the four male participants chose to focus on career accomplishments. It is necessary to note that the other male collaborated with his wife on a “family” theme.

Relationship of the Oral Narrative to the Visual Collage

Appendix E is a coding chart that compares the key elements of the oral narrative to the visual collage. As I repeatedly listened to the tape-recorded stories, I began to notice a commonality between the tone or the audio personality and the organization of the collage. As C.C. spoke, I immediately sensed her confidence. She told her story as if she had told it many times before. It flowed and had appropriate pauses making it pleasurable to hear. As I examine the arrangement of her imagery, there is a visual flow. The red chili peppers weave the “snapshots” together. She has visually connected the key elements of her story. (See Figure 4, p. 83)

In contrast, R.C.’s recording was difficult to follow. Her narrative voice, especially her nervous laughs, indicated that she was uncomfortable. The general tone of her story was like a report about her responsibilities growing up on a farm. As I examine
her collage, I note the way each picture is separate and even though the pictures all relate to her story, they do not express her story.

I looked for comments in the oral narratives that may give us information about the themes and items included in the collages. The following quotations came from the oral narratives.

"I have drawn many things over the years so I wanted that in here." (C.R.) He was referring to the Christmas cards that he designs and produces on his computer and are included in his collage. He is very proud of his computer-generated images and he has been creating his own cards since 1976.

"The mop tells about a disaster that I had there, that I've never gotten over thinking about. It stayed with me all these years." (D.O.B.) She created a miniature mop out of a pencil and yarn at home, to attach to her collage representing her most embarrassing memory that periodically turns up in her life review.

"This, of course, is what made me think it was the most important thing in our lives." (M.D.) She was referring to when she opened up a magazine and found the picture of the children with open mouths. This reminded her of the important role music and singing played during her childhood in North Dakota.

In an article titled "Art, Narrative, and Human Nature", David Novitz explained that narrative identities help determine what we consider to be important. The influence of society on this personal view is inseparable. He stated "... these narratives acquire their legitimacy and normative role from the society that accepts them" (p. 155).
believe that the themes that were chosen in the Memory Collage Project are indicative of this generation's values, as well as each individual's values.

Every female participant portrayed her family to some degree in her collage. Because a woman was considered to be responsible to her family about 50 years ago, this is not surprising. Two of the three male recordings were organized in a way that seemed reminiscent of a work resume. The other male, J.D., incorporated the retelling of his career status into a story about a reunion with a friend who worked with him at Firestone fifty years ago.

Which Came First, the Story or the Collage?

Those that had prepared materials at home came in with a very clear idea of the story they wanted to illustrate. Those that were not aware of the project prior to the production, responded spontaneously to the available pictures. Regardless of the length of time allowed for preparation, the participants were able to complete a collage and make a recording.

Interestingly enough, the three participants who knew nothing of the project idea before the production day, finished within the hour, because they spontaneously responded to materials that were provided. It was clear that others could have developed this project further if more time were allowed. A lot of interaction between participants and the assistants was centered on finding specific pictures. Many spent most of the hour "hunting" for a particular picture, rather than either adapting an available image, drawing their own image or changing their idea to suit an available image as the woman from
Hungary had. Implications for future projects may include discussing the importance of flexibility when gathering pictures from limited sources.

The videotape recorded the earnest work of the participants. The serious expressions and deliberate cutting and arranging of imagery suggest to me that some did this project out of duty. Some had never used a glue stick before, so experimenting with this technique was a new experience. For others, especially those that did not know about the project, a lighter, more playful approach was taken. It is quite possible that the week of preparation inhibited some of the participants. But, clearly because of the amount of outside preparation done, there was great thought and investment put in to the project. Inhibiting factors included the awareness of the videographers and knowledge that the results of their memory collages would be used in a graduate thesis study.

Question 3: **What specific teaching strategies and types of motivation are effective with an older population?**

This project began with a formal introduction. I stood at a podium and explained the purpose of the project and requested their participation. I showed an example of a finished collage and asked the audience to listen to the accompanying oral narrative. Even though I was uncomfortable with the formality, it did allow me to introduce the project to the entire group in a very short amount of time. An auditorium or cafeteria is probably a common environment for introducing a project to a large group of older adults.
The idea of sharing their stories and collages got the most negative reaction of all. (They reacted more positively to doing an art project!) Recognizing that many of the participants were uncomfortable in public situations, I decided that one-on-one interactions would be less stressful for all of us. By going around the room, I was able to monitor and assist when I felt it was appropriate. I suggested to the four volunteers that this teaching strategy would help to encourage participation. We used the collage examples in our one-on-one conversations to better explain the collage process, which made the project goal more understandable.

I am positive that the prospect of having a finished collage and tape-recording of their story were motivating factors for participation. In response to the question “Do you intend to share your collage and tape with anyone?” sixty-seven percent were looking forward to sharing their collage and tape with someone, twenty-eight percent were not interested in sharing their collage and tape and for five percent the question was not applicable.

The closing exhibition and storytelling session was received with enthusiasm. It is funny that during my Introduction, the most apprehension was focused on the idea of sharing the collages and stories. Three weeks later, I felt that I had disappointed quite a few people who really wanted to share their collage and story, but we ran out of time. Because we had only a half-hour for this event, the participants chose to tell their stories and refer to their collages only in relationship to the oral narrative. I had intended for the participants to explain their decisions for image selection and arrangement and even to
get peer feedback, but that was not realistic in the time allowed. In future projects, self-reflection and sharing would play a more important role in learning about art.

Question 4: How will I alter my current teaching pedagogy with elementary children to be effective with an older population?

I discovered more similarities between the elementary and elderly populations than differences. The questions asked and concerns of the participants represented a range of personality types that one encounters at any level. This experience definitely made me aware that some behaviors are just human and not age-specific. Another similarity between the two groups is that for the most part, they have not had many art experiences.

Now, I can laugh at the way the older adults plunged in to their production time. I compared them to first-grade students in their “lack of control and respect”. When I spoke, they did not look up from their work. What did I expect? Most of the participants had thought about their collage idea for a whole week, prepared materials and were excited to begin! My intent was to use a non-intimidating technique with non-intimidating materials to encourage participation and this was successful. So, rather than interrupt, I allowed the fervor to continue.

I was careful not to appear condescending in any way and not push the participants beyond their comfort level. In an elementary setting, I would be more forceful because I have a lasting relationship with a classroom of children. As a guest in
the church, I was distinctly aware that I was a visitor and many participants were there specifically to please and accommodate me.

My interactions and conversations with the older adults were reserved because I did not have a rapport yet. In hindsight, I could have been more assertive without being intimidating. Since my goal was to encourage participation, I played it safe. I am positive that if I continued with that group of older adults, my approach would actually be more similar to my elementary teaching pedagogy. By the end of the Memory Collage production, I felt a rapport developing, and feel sure that some of my “playful approaches” to teaching art would be successful. Immediately, I thought of “Token Response”, a game that encourages critical thinking about existing artworks, based on one’s personal interpretation.

Because of reduced energy and capabilities, certain tasks were difficult for some, such as cutting shapes. B.A. suffered from arthritis and had little fine motor control. An assistant cut out a couple images that are pasted toward the center. B.A. added the other pictures, cutting them in basic geometric shapes. (See Figure 3, p. 70) She told me that the extra pictures needed to be attached to tell her story, so the fact that they hung over the edge was not a concern. I do not know if B.A. asked for assistance cutting, but I do not believe in doing any steps of an art project for a child. To me, this takes the ownership away and does not allow them to develop necessary skills. However, an older adult who is losing certain capabilities presents a different challenge to a teacher. Being sensitive to the older adult and making decisions based on their individual preferences seems to be most appropriate.
Setting up the exhibition and leading the storytelling session followed my elementary teaching pedagogy. I feel it is vital that my students learn to interpret and evaluate their own artwork as well as that of others. Learning to accept a variety of viewpoints is crucial to their personal development. There is no question that there is opportunity for validation by peers, which was evident in the exhibition of the memory collages.

Question 5: **Would older adults enjoy working on the Memory Collage Project?**

The second interview question asked the participants whether they enjoyed working on the project. Eighty-nine percent did enjoy working on the memory collage and eleven percent somewhat enjoyed working on it. The most popular response to “What part did you enjoy most?” was “remembering or recollecting” (33%). Other responses included “planning and coordinating the idea” (16%), “going through the magazines” (16%) and “seeing everyone else engaged in the project” (16%). Suggestions for improvement included allowing more time and providing a larger variety of images from which to choose.

An important indicator of a project’s effectiveness or success is participation. At the time of the interviews, seventy-eight percent did complete their collage and twenty-two percent did not. Two participants completed their collages at home and brought them back, C.W. did not begin a collage and the couple that did not go to the Bahamas did not complete their collage. The level of participation, motivation and interaction was
extremely high. The positive responses to the interview questions as well as the hum of industry suggested that the project was successful in terms of participation. Since the majority of participants found using a life story to be more interesting than another subject, I feel it is safe to say that this group found the idea of linking reminiscence to artmaking to be an enjoyable experience.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Summary

My interest in working with older adults in art education stemmed from two intergenerational experiences in my elementary art classroom. By conversing with each of the older adults, I became more aware of their personal pursuit of lifelong learning in the arts. Curious about existing literature on the topic of Art Education for older adults, I realized that there is a serious lacking of current research in this field. Since my background and interest is in instruction, I specifically wanted some suggestions for effective teaching strategies and successful Art Education curriculum. My thesis research explored using the natural process of life review to inspire visual imagery in the making of a memory collage. In addition to a hands-on project, the 18 participants had the opportunity to make an oral recording of their story to accompany their visual collage.

I worked with an intact church group in northwest Tucson and met with them on four consecutive Mondays. During my first visit, I explained the memory collage project and showed examples. The second visit was the production of the memory collage. During my third visit, I met with each of the participants and interviewed them to get their feedback about the experience. This information was later used for quantitative data analysis. The closure of the project was the final week and included an exhibition of the finished collages and storytelling by four members.
In addition to the interview responses, I obtained data from observations of videotape footage that documented my instruction and interactions throughout the production and closing exhibition. The interactions and dynamics of the group were recorded by another videographer, which gave me additional data. By coding the data of 12 participants, I was able to analyze the information to develop qualitative responses to my research questions. I examined the creation of a collage based on memory with elderly students, specific teaching strategies and how I would adjust my current teaching pedagogy to encourage participation. I also wanted to observe how the elderly would approach a project based on a memory and analyze the results.

Conclusions

The Memory Collage Project with Older Adults provided me with some results that were very specific to this particular group, but also, information and experience that has broader implications for further pursuit. The use of reminiscence as a catalyst is becoming more popular among those working with older adults in a variety of settings. By tapping into this natural process, I was able to get remarkable participation and cooperation from the participants in the study. According to Lamdin (1997), in an Elderlearning survey the third most popular reason that older adults pursue education is to meet people and socialize. The responses to my interview question, “What did you enjoy the most?” confirmed that social interaction contributed to the participants’ enjoyment. I would take steps to encourage even more community building in future projects.
The most popular subject for the memory collage was “Family”. There was great diversity in the types of stories the participants recollected in this open-ended project. Some chose specific events, but others told stories that featured their accomplishments over many years. By not imposing restrictions on the participants I hoped to encourage everyone to participate. My intention was to develop trust and interest through this experience, with hopes of developing future projects that would incorporate a more rigorous dialogue, technical instruction and art history.

The “Older Adult” Population

Since the group I worked with ranged in age from 62 years old to 94 years old, their life experiences varied a great deal. Two separate generations were represented in this group and their physical and mental abilities varied greatly. In my elementary art classroom, I am aware of the individuals but because of their common ages, they are a relatively homogenous group, so I am able to make certain assumptions about their experiences and developmental levels. When working with the diverse group we call “older adults” it is important not to make any assumptions. Competency with basic skills, such as using a glue stick, needs special consideration in lesson planning because some older adults may be inexperienced with certain materials. Much of the research cited in this thesis about the older adult learner is specific to those that are seeking continuing education. The group that participated in the Memory Collage Project was not seeking an art experience.
This experience presented new challenges to me as an art teacher that I did not anticipate. I often felt that I was being pulled in several directions at once. Even though, the older adults did not initiate interactions as often as younger children do, once they “had me”, I often felt they did not want me to leave. For example, C.R. was definitely capable of recording his memory by himself, but he wanted me to stay because I might ask him “something he would forget”. I was frequently reminded of their neediness and sometimes felt that I was being held captive against my will.

Often in a classroom situation, a teacher is notified about the history of her students and their particular disabilities or areas of sensitivity. It is understood that the student-teacher relationship is usually long-term, so sharing this information is conducive to forming good educational relationships. In this short-term experience, however, I knew very little about the existing relationships (marital and longstanding friendships) and the personal hardships each had endured. Since the subject of the artwork was personal in nature, I was careful in my probing and very conscious of sensitive issues.

As I stated earlier, I could not think of a way to get their attention without seeming condescending. In hindsight, a whistle or clap may have been effective and may be a technique commonly used with older adults, but I personally thought it inappropriate and decided it would be better to work with each participant individually. In future projects, there would certainly be a need for getting everyone’s attention and I would have to develop a method that felt comfortable for all of us.

I believe my attraction to older adults shone through in my interactions with them. According to Diane Barret (1998), the personal characteristics of an art instructor will
often determine the success of their programs. Those qualities include an enthusiastic approach, personal interest in participants, patience, the ability to design projects that stimulate creativity, being prepared and the ability to teach from a stance of encouragement (p. 120). I exhibited these qualities in my interactions with the older adults. Several individuals implied that they were only participating to please me. Of course, this made me uncomfortable because I would rather they participate for themselves, but I believe they received something in return for their efforts besides knowing they helped me with my thesis project. The proof of this is observable in the footage of the final exhibition.

**Final Exhibition**

Undeniable pride was expressed when the participants located their artwork and that of their friends displayed on the wall. Watching them stand back and smile was proof to me that the project meant something personal to them. All of the four participants I asked were eager to share their story publicly. I regretted that not everyone got the chance to share their story and have their work the focus of the audience because I sensed that some were disappointed. Fortunately, the program director volunteered to devote some time in each subsequent meeting to sharing and storytelling.

The exhibition and the interactions throughout the production show the importance of social acceptance and support. Participants sought suggestions from each other and enjoyed seeing everyone else engaged. My experience supports the implications for teaching art in a group setting. Planning art lessons that encourage social
interaction within the process or as part of an art criticism activity would be most effective.

**Ideas for Improvement on the Project**

*Finding the right picture*

It seemed that some of the participants who did outside preparation, were very determined to find specific pictures to tell their story. Because of limited time and resources, such a narrow focus could prove to be disappointing. When I direct a memory collage project again, I would discuss ways of dealing with this dilemma. (Drawing the image, discussing the story to expand the possibilities of alternate subjects, etc.) By listing subjects or themes of images that are being sought on a blackboard, a stronger sense of community could result. This would encourage interaction among participants and offer assistance to those that are determined to find a specific image. It would also offer those who finish early a constructive way to contribute to the group.

The responses from those participants that did not know about the Memory Collage Project prior to the production day indicated that working spontaneously had no negative effect on their enjoyment of the experience. If participants are able to respond to the existing images, rather than become consumed with finding certain ones, they may enjoy the project more. Additionally, a guided visualization before beginning the project, may inspire a greater variety of images so that the participants could have a more flexible approach to finding their imagery.

For future use, I modified the lesson plan to include more discussion about the process of image selection and placement. By briefly referring to the work of collage
examples by Bearden, Matisse, Shapiro, etc., a variety of approaches would be described. I also included a list of possible questions in the Discussion Ideas segment of the modified lesson plan. (See Appendix F)

I think an interactive demonstration would be highly successful. By gathering up some images in advance, a hypothetical memory could be illustrated in the collage medium. By making decisions "out loud" and inviting audience feedback, the necessary thought processes would be explained. This would encourage greater experimentation by the participants.

_Tape-recording the story_

The biggest inhibition of the project was tape-recording the oral stories. An obvious solution occurred to me while viewing the videotape of the final presentation. There was a tone of excitement audible in the video recording from the exhibition that was not detectable in the pre-recorded version. It was clear that the active audience made the tale more exciting to tell and distracted them from the pressure of making a recording. Discreetly recording the storyteller as they shared their collage and oral narrative might eliminate the discomfort that many people experienced. My hunch is that a 'live' recording may be more fun to share later, too, because the validation and applause of the audience would also be recorded.

**Implications**

_Curriculum Development in Art Education_

Pearl Greenberg (1987) stated that the majority of people working with older adults have no training in the visual arts and cited the frequent craft-kit approach in most
senior programming. According to Barret (1998), if art classes are to have meaning beyond just “keeping hands busy”, then the project needs to “foster personal choices and self reflection” (p. 123). It may be possible that there is need for two types of curriculum. One that would be useable by recreation and activity directors and another that would be available to those in the field of Art Education interested in working with this population at greater depth.

Joan Hart has developed a curriculum that could be used by activity directors as well as those with strong art backgrounds. She developed “Museum One” to encourage discussion and interpretation of existing “famous” artworks. Her slide shows and lists of provocative questions could be administered by anyone with an interest in the arts. Hart has addressed the difficulty of exposing people to artworks that have limited accessibility. By bringing reproductions and slides to nursing homes and recreation centers, she has conquered the numerous problems associated with transportation and immobility.

The Memory Collage Project was developed as a pilot for future use with older adults. My intention was to learn from this experience and fine-tune it for use in a variety of settings. (See Appendix L for the Modified Lesson Plan) I personally paid for an edited videotape of this thesis project. I included what I felt to be the strongest evidence of the necessity of quality art programming. By documenting the interest, participation and conversations, I wanted this tape to advocate for provocative art programming. My hope is to show it to other art educators interested in working with older adults. Additionally, I hope to use it as advertisement for my instruction in the future. It could
be useful as a way to show my interactive skills and an example of the type of curriculum I feel is challenging and rewarding to an older population.

There are logical extensions of this project for curriculum development. Once rapport is established, art historical examples could be discussed and then the memory collages could be re-examined. Since the response was so positive to sharing stories, another way to approach discussions about aesthetics could be a “show and tell” of personal collections. By examining the qualities of the objects, thought provoking discussions could result in art criticism. This is yet another way to establish rapport and build trust for further instruction.

**Instruction**

As I develop curriculum and continue to learn more about the older adult learner, I will also become familiar with different disabilities and make appropriate accommodations in my lesson plans. My immediate personal career goal is to incorporate this experience and its findings into future projects with my students in a Tucson elementary school. I will be a full-time art teacher for 600 students and I intend to bring older adults into my classroom for collaborative and intergenerational art experiences. I eventually want to focus on curriculum development and instruction specifically designed for the needs and desires of older adults.

In order to change the order of things, it seems imperative that an appropriate curriculum be developed that supports learning in the arts. DBAE may provide a basic format for older adult art education. Exposure to historical artworks and participating in
critical discussions based on existing artworks may be very rewarding to the older adult. Kauppenin (1988) stated that older adults have integrative understanding, a special mental ability that allows people to recognize and value conflicts and opposing ideas such as love and hate, war and peace, etc. This skill is applicable to discussing art as well as creating art. It seems that art production may be less intimidating if a more conversational activity preceded it. The development of a comprehensive approach to curriculum development, such as DBAE, would elevate the status of art education for older adults as it has for the K-12 population.

I am interested in further investigating the number of art programs that are lead by people without training in the arts. Is there interest in learning about effective ways of running art programs? Is there money available for in-service training? Recently, I was contacted by a Tucson adult daycare facility that is interested in having me speak to their staff about different art activities and their value. There must be other activity directors with a desire to improve art programming in their facility. I am anxious to see how will they respond to my lesson plan for the Memory Collage Project.

Volunteers in the Classroom

For this thesis study, I was very conscious of the preciousness of each minute. The results of the Memory Collage Project would not have been successful without the assistance of the four volunteers. In my elementary art classroom, I have a systematic way of approaching instruction and supply distribution. If I taught a group over a period of time, similar systems would be established, requiring less assistance from volunteers with materials and instruction, but their personal interactions with the participants were
irreplaceable. This particular project did require a lot of personal dialogue between the participants, the assistants and me. Because each person chose a different subject and idea to illustrate, discussion was helpful to brainstorm ideas and identify important images. The volunteer assistants indicated that they felt personally rewarded through their individual interactions.

I imagine that the assistance of volunteers may be a necessary consideration for anyone interested in working with this population. The four pre-service graduate students volunteered to help because of their own interest in this population. I cannot think of a better way to entice qualified people to enter this field than to offer first-hand experiences. Through individual experience, one could determine effective methods of working with this population. Since this population is interested in receiving art programming, pre-service teachers may find doors open at nursing homes and adult daycare facilities to their project ideas.

When using reminiscence to fuel a study in art education, it is hard to avoid becoming wrapped up in the stories. After reading La Porte's article on an intergenerational art project illustrating oral narratives, I realized how important describing the content of the narratives is to a study that uses reminiscence as a base. It is also necessary to recognize that using reminiscence in this way makes it a tool, but the fundamental issue is still its application to art education.

According to Barbara Friedman (1999), intergenerational programming should promote more than just a "feel good" outcome (p. 6). She stated that intergenerational educators must address social problems and build community. The opportunity to
“change mind sets” (Butler, 1999, p. xii) of young people is definitely a perk to pursuing intergenerational education.

**Ideas for Further Research**

I am interested in learning more about ways imagery can inspire reminiscence in the art process. I found it interesting that those who responded spontaneously to images seemed to greatly enjoy the artmaking process and did not show the frustration that others did because they could not find the “perfect” image. It would be interesting to work with larger numbers of participants to better evaluate and research the effectiveness of both approaches.

As I got to know the participants, I became aware of how their individual methods for image arrangement and sense of design seemed correlated to their personality type. For example, those that had “uptight” personalities produced collages with order and clean lines. Exploring the relationship of personality types to their process and resulting art products could provide interesting information about the artmaking process.

I would like to further explore the impact of socialization on the type of life stories we choose to present. In the Memory Collage Project it was suggested that socialization has played an important role in defining one’s way of life by one’s sex. I would like to further explore this relationship and additionally, the influence of one’s class and other factors on the selection of life stories.

Using reminiscence to inspire an intergenerational project has great potential. It could be fascinating to utilize the older adult’s process of life review with the child’s
forecast for the future in a collaborative project. The dialogue that they might share, as well as the art they create, could be enriching to both populations.

Exploring ways to reach those outside the realm of art education (such as pharmaceutical companies) may prove very effective to help increase opportunities for art educators interested in older populations. Once money and support is directed to further research, this field will get its due recognition. If employment opportunities begin to exist, research development and university programs will develop, as well.

The Future for Older Adult Art Education

Dr. Robert Butler's wish is that future generations look back on the twenty-first century and observe that it was the era when "serious analysis of the milestones of the life course and of old age began" (p. xii). This statement poses a huge challenge to all educators. With the promise of increased life expectancies, our whole society must develop new social arrangements to accommodate this change. It only seems natural that means for artistic expression be offered to this specific age group to not only improve their quality of life, but to improve the quality of life for our society as a whole. The Memory Collage Project was a pilot that applied the natural process of life review to an artmaking experience. The results and implications of this project indicate that there are numerous directions for further study.

The cry for more research in the field of Older Adult Art Education is just beginning to be heard. In 1985, Pearl Greenberg advocated developing certification programs for art teachers of older adults that would include gerontology and recreational therapy (Barrett, 1993, p. 133). Because opportunities for employment were basically
non-existent this proposal was never taken seriously (Greenberg, personal communication, June 5, 2000).

According to Butler (1999), in the next decade, the baby boomers will represent not only the largest generation of older persons in U.S. history, but also a “vital, active, experienced, engaged, and useful older population” (p. xi). I hope that this population will direct more attention and money into further research in the field of Art Education. Hopefully, then, this ignored segment of our society will flourish with gratifying opportunities for learning and teaching in Art Education.
Postscript

After I realized that the pictures I made of the collages from the video stills were of mediocre quality, I decided to contact four of the participants. I hoped that they might still have their memory collages and allow me to borrow them to re-photograph. It was great to hear their voices again and I realized that in a very short amount of time, I had formed relationships with each of them.

All four were receptive to lending me the collage. What I found incredible was that two people had their collages displayed on their wall. When I visited B.A. in an assisted living facility, she had her collage hanging beside her bed. C.R. led me to his computer room and right above his desk was his memory collage with his nametag mounted underneath it. D.O.B. told me that her collage because was in Phoenix where she had shared it with her daughter. Much to my surprise, her daughter mailed it back, so that I could photograph it again.

This opportunity to follow-up on the experience proved that the Memory Collage Project was indeed meaningful. Whether they are reminded of the art experience or the memory itself, the collage is a visual representation that still plays a role in their daily lives.
Appendix A

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Don't forget ... Next Monday we will be making a memory collage. Please think about an important story or memory that you would like to record. (This would make a great gift for someone!)

BRING IN...

- Photographs (you will get your original copy back)
- Memorabilia that relates to your story (tickets, invitations, newspaper clippings, etc.)
- Fabric, buttons, lace or anything that you have that would make your memory collage special!
Appendix B

THE MEMORY COLLAGE PROJECT
(original version)

Objectives:
Participants will recall an important memory from their lives. Using a variety of materials, they will represent key visual elements to create a collage. An oral narrative will be tape recorded to accompany it.

Materials Needed:
Scissors, glue sticks, matboard (cut to background size), pencils, markers, collage materials; such as, Life magazines from the 50s and 60s, travel, home, gardening, sport magazines, maps, cardboard, fabric, yarn, etc.
5 tape recorders and a tape cassette for every participant.

Number of Classes: 3 sessions.
1. Introduction (1/2 hour)
2. Production (1 hour)
3. Closure/Storytelling (1/2 hour)

DAY 1 - Introduction:
Begin by explaining how important personal stories are...without them families cannot pass down history and an understanding of their experiences. There may be someone in the group that is recognized as the “storyteller”. Storytelling is a skill that can be developed, but everyone has stories to tell and sometimes even the most mundane event can become a fascinating story to the listener. A fun result of participating in this project is that we all get to know each other better. By creating a memory collage in both a visual and oral medium, they will have two unique recordings of this story to share with a relative or friend.

Instruction:
Share an example of a memory collage. If possible, have a tape-recording or the oral story that was illustrated. Explain the images the artist chose and the importance of the placement for creating an interesting composition. Displaying examples of collages made by artists such as Romare Bearden, Miriam Shapiro and Henri Matisse would demonstrate a variety of approaches to the collage medium.

This project should be introduced a week, or so, in advance so that participants have the opportunity to prepare ideas and materials. Ask everyone to bring in any materials that they would like to incorporate into their collage; such as, photos (can be xeroxed so the original is not damaged), memorabilia and anything else they think would be appropriate. Reassure them that some materials will be provided.
Provide a flyer reminding them of the project and ideas for materials to bring in. (See Appendix B)
**DAY 2 – Production:**

Room Setup: Have all examples of collages readily available. Stacks of magazines, glue sticks and scissors should be arranged at each table. Make sure there is easy accessibility to all seats to accommodate walkers, etc.

Introduce volunteer assistants and clearly explain availability of materials. Be available to answer questions and intervene when appropriate.

Determine when an interruption for tape-recording their story is appropriate. Accompany person to tape recorder and make suggestions for the introduction of their story. Label the tape cassette with their name and title. If they would prefer your company, be an active listener as they make their recording.

**DAY 3 - Closure/Storytelling:**

Display artwork with artists’ names in a space that has good accessibility.

(Displaying their artwork is an important chance for self-reflection as well as recognition among peers. Allow as many people a chance to tell their story as possible.)

Making a comfortable seating arrangement is important for the listeners. Invite audience participation, by encouraging questions and comments about the collages and their oral stories. If some people did not get a chance to share their story that wished to, make arrangements for storytelling at a future time.
## APPENDIX C

### CODING FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>COLLAGE DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ORAL NARRATIVE</th>
<th>MY INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>IMAGES USED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.A. Female</td>
<td>All transportation images (motorcycles, Marlboro man on horse, car, boat) images overlapped and extended off board. Some were obviously cut out by assistant, but others she cut out in rough rectangular format.</td>
<td>FAMILY—Positive memory of children and life in different parts of the country. Daughters with boyfriends on motorcycles. Her own motorcycle riding adventure. Children giving thanks for horseback riding lessons because they were necessary for transportation in Alaska. An overflow of seemingly scattered ideas that she pieced together under the theme of transportation from different time periods.</td>
<td>Before starting the project, she described a different story of growing up in Hungary with poppies and fish biting legs. Did video interview to please me and be helpful. She also stated that she could explain these images better (to me).</td>
<td>Idea—yes. Images—no. Because she could not find any pictures to portray her original idea, she was inspired by pictures she found of transportation. Those determined different stories about transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.D. Male</td>
<td>Care not taken in cutting and placement. 3 key images chosen to tell story: map, tire and fish. Video showed Bruce placing tire picture on matboard for him.</td>
<td>FRIENDS—Reconnected with old friend from working years. Worked at Firestone in Akron, Ohio, reunion after 50 years. Friend had picture of them in Canada on fishing trip. John did not remember catching the fish he was holding in picture. Tone of voice sounded like a Garrison Keillor natural. Seemed to enjoy telling the story.</td>
<td>I introduced the project to him individually. Said he was not sure what to do, but did not want to see examples. He already had an idea and was hoping to find pictures to tell that story. Came in to support me via director's request.</td>
<td>Idea—yes. Images—no. Big Firestone ad in Life magazine, fish and map to show where in Canada they went fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C. Female</td>
<td>No overlap. Individual items carefully placed (eggs, chick, rooster, map and farm scene). Strong craftsmanship/order. Variety of image sizes. Vivid yellow corn and chicks are focal point.</td>
<td>FAMILY—Her contribution to family. Life on a farm in Kansas. One of 8 children. Described her first &quot;job&quot; collecting the eggs and feeding the chickens. Voice indicated a sense of pride in her accomplishment. Uncomfortable tone and pauses in storytelling.</td>
<td>I did not interact with her during the project. Volunteer assistant helped her find images and made suggestions for arrangement. Same assistant listened while she made recording. Bond.</td>
<td>Idea—yes. Images—yes. According to volunteer assistant, she bought corn product at grocery so she would have the packaging for collage project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.O. Female</td>
<td>Used many repetitive images of b/w Xeroxes of trip and glued to 2 black boards. Added xeroxed poem about the place they visited. Carefully cut, glued and arranged. &quot;Scrapbook style&quot;</td>
<td>FRIENDS—Taking risk. Conservative upbringing. First trip without family. Went to a camp 150 miles from home with &quot;girlfriends from the office&quot;. Shocked mother with suntan when she returned.</td>
<td>Very upright. Had definite vision of outcome she wanted and would not settle for anything less. Enjoyed using pictures of herself and pointed out which figure was her in each picture.</td>
<td>Idea—yes. Images—yes. Brought in numerous photos to get xeroxed. Were not to her specifications, so assistant made new copies. Seemed to already have an arrangement in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSON</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.C.</td>
<td>Used actual photos, peppers label and repeated red pepper image as symbol.</td>
<td>FAMILY-Taking risk with family. While living in Minnesota, wanted to have Mexican food.</td>
<td>Knew exactly what she wanted, worked independently. I interrupted her to make her oral recording and she very reluctantly left her work.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - yes. Came in with pictures and ideas ready to assemble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Overlapping, labeling, strong composition. Diagonal placement. &quot;Scrapbook style&quot;. Combined handwritten and magazine text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.R.</td>
<td>Sophisticated arrangement with technical illustrations. Looks like a graphic advertisement. Careful execution. Concern for balance of color and form.</td>
<td>CAREER-Accomplishments in career. Gained expertise in multiple fields including automobile and airplane industry, and creating own X-mas cards. Also mentioned his love of animals and his 2 &quot;kitties&quot;.</td>
<td>C.R. asked if I would ask him questions for his story recording. Actually, he did not need any questions. His story was very coherent and chronological.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - yes. Brought in color copies of computer-generated images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D.O.B.</td>
<td>Stark, labeling. &quot;Scrapbook style&quot;. Balanced composition. The mop is a strong focal point because it is 3-dimensional and bright. Taped to background on angle creating interest.</td>
<td>CHILDHOOD-Most embarrassing memory! Wet her pants when teacher would not let her go to bathroom. Had to stand by radiator and was totally humiliated.</td>
<td>Only reacted positively to her mop. She asked for a picture of a school, so I conveyed her need to assistants.</td>
<td>Idea - yes. Images - some. Brought in photo and actually made a mop out pencil and yarn at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>NEGATIVE EVENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>3 b/w magazine photos of children. (at keyboard, open-moutheched and sledding) careful cutting and thoughtful arrangement. Appears Postmodern.</td>
<td>FAMILY-Family activity – married into family with 17 children. Singing &quot;kept them together&quot;. Most of the family interested in music. Since they lived in the country of North Dakota, it was their only source of entertainment. Most rewarding thing and even her children today, are involved in music.</td>
<td>Pleased with her to make recording. Resistant to idea of hearing her voice, but was ok if she could keep. I brought the tape recorder closer to her and sat with her ten minutes, as she recorded her story and I interjected comments and questions.</td>
<td>Idea – no. Images – no. Knew nothing of project before-hand. Pictures she found quickly determined this idea. Only real criteria was that the pictures &quot;looked&quot; like they were singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.E.W. Female</td>
<td>2 xeroxes of posed family pictures. Child-like drawings in crayon of car, house and pennies. Very literal representation of key elements in story.</td>
<td>FAMILY-Parenting. Her children getting into trouble. Her parenting/reprimanding sons after one broke a glass door and another stole gum and cigarettes from a store. (NEGATIVE EVENT)</td>
<td>I glassed over, I heard her story of punishing her children several times myself. Could not get her to commit to any one idea for collage.</td>
<td>Idea – no. Images – no. Ended up completing at home because she did not find the pictures she wanted, so she drew them in crayon, but seemed satisfied with the results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.W. Male</td>
<td>No collage was made.</td>
<td>CAREER-Entire life record. Childhood memory of being messenger for mother who was a midwife. Explanation of educational choices. Making choices for optimum outcome and good of others. Credited success to his wife and others to whom he is grateful. Celebrity moments (private tea at Windsor Castle.)</td>
<td>Only wanted to TELL the story and make sure that I understood his prior experience in leading a group rather than being a participant. He did not know how to choose any one event or story because there was more to each story than what a single story or visual representation could record. My attempts to help him focus on one idea failed.</td>
<td>Idea – no. Images – no. Despite 2 women trying to assist him in locating pictures, he took no steps toward cutting out any images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.G. and F.G. Male and Female</td>
<td>Fabulous color picture from Life of 50's couple getting married with punch bowl. Included map and paragraph explaining anniversary trip. &quot;One of the best things we’ve had in married life.&quot;</td>
<td>FAMILY-Family reunion for 50th anniversary in Bahamas. Sons and their families. Beautiful party in Detroit, told to pack clothes for warm weather. Flew to Florida and took cruise ship to Bahamas. Wife recorded and asked husband if he wanted to add anything. He said, &quot;I think you’ve about covered it, dear.&quot;</td>
<td>Enthusiastic about working with each other. No interaction with me.</td>
<td>Idea – yes. Images – yes. Brought in pictures from photo album.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

CODING FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>NARRATIVE</th>
<th>COLLAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| R.C.   | - Step-by-step organization of her role with chickens on the farm.  
          - Humor.  
          - Conflicts: Hens going to setting and rooster attacks. | - Each item separated with equal white space around it.  
          - All key items pictured.  
          - Strong sense of order.  
          - Story determined visuals. |
| C.C.   | - Very detailed.  
          - "Blow-by-blow" description of event - Learned how to make tortillas with Mexican woman when a store was closed.  
          - Told like a "tale".  
          - Family event – something they all would remember. | - Careful arrangement.  
          - Confident use of color and organization (placed pictures on angles, overlapped, developed own red chili pepper shape as decorative element that directs eye around collage.  
          - Story determined visuals. |
| C.R.   | - Accomplishments in automobile and airplane career.  
          - Areas of expertise.  
          - His favorite things – cats.  
          - Chronological span of working life. | - Balance of color.  
          - Used most of matboard.  
          - Proud of producing images on his computer.  
          - Hung on wall like trophy.  
          - Both ways. Story determined some visuals, some visuals determined story. |
| D.O.B. | - Most embarrassing moment.  
          - Childhood memory of wetting pants in first grade.  
          - Humor and acceptance.  
          - Told like an entertainer. | - Made 3-dimensional mop.  
          - Careful placement and labeling.  
          - Shared with daughter.  
          - Story determined visuals. |
| M.D.   | - A way of life – importance of music because she married into a large musical family and was isolated in N. Dakota without much to do.  
          - Mentioned current event of family reunion where music still was important. | - Minimal effort.  
          - 3 black and white images.  
          - Strong composition.  
          - Seems postmodern.  
          - Visual determined story. |
The following narratives were transcribed so that the storyteller’s voice could be “heard”. Grammar and wording may sound awkward at times.

**Narrative - R.C.**

"I was born in Kansas in the county of Miami in a little town of Paola south of Kansas City. Population around 5,000. I lived in Kansas most of my life, so far. (Laugh) Kansas got a bad rap from ...uh... Dorothy, but I’ve been there for seventy-some years and I’ve never seen a tornado. As a child, about ten or so years old, my first job on the farm, where the family lived, and I lived with a family with eight children. My first job was to gather eggs. And it was a big responsibility. It was a pleasure until the hens decided to go to setting and then they were real cross. So to break them up, we had a very serious way of getting the hens out of their setting.

We’d take her off the nest and douse her in the horse tank and then throw her in jail which was where she stayed for three days. By the time she came out of there, she was ready to go to laying and forget about setting. But when we did set our hens, to hatch the little chickens, we would fix a nice little nest of new hay and then put 15 eggs in the nest where they could exercise and feed and water and after incubation time they would hatch these chickens.

My main problem in the chicken yard was a rooster. We always had a renegade rooster and he’d like to wait for me to come out and he’d come at me and try to flog me. He flapped his wings and scared the life, or the day lights out of me. So, I used to carry a stick that helped protect me some.

Now, the food we fed the chickens was corn we raised on our farm and it came in big ears. We put it in a hopper of a corn chopper and they fit down into the sheller and it was turned by a big iron wheel. Corn cobs would fly out the front and the corn or grains would drop in the center where we would get it to feed the chickens. I could go on to later when I learned to help brother with butchering the chickens. And we learned that after their heads were cut off, we would scald them in water. Mother always told me to “Rub them good, Rub them good!” with a hand full of wet feathers and then it was much easier to clean. And later I learned how to cut up the chicken. It was most delicious when you fry the chicken in lard. Dip them in flour, skin and all. So that was my first job and the process of things I had on the farm."

**Comments**

Even though her story was elaborate, R.C. struggled with finding the right words. Her vocabulary and grammar suggest limited education. Her recording sounded like she felt self-conscious at times, and her frequent giggles made her delivery sound nervous. The video footage shows R.C. at work with pursed lips and nervous blinking. The uptight mannerisms indicate that for some reason this was not a casual project for her. She was taking this “assignment” seriously.
Collage

Each of the nine images are in color and represent singular images. "Kansas" is cut out from a map and is placed at the top of the left side of the collage like a title. Right next to it is a small square, representing the town where she grew up. Below "Kansas" is a large color magazine picture of a girl and a horse. Behind them are mountains. The right side of the collage has six color pictures representing singular objects from the farm. On the top is a photo of a rooster and beside it is a cartoon of a rooster. Three eggs from a magazine picture were carefully cut and pasted beside a picture of corn cobs. The assistant working with R.C. said that she bought frozen corn at the grocery store specifically for this picture on its packaging. The same intense yellow is on a picture of two chicks. Beside the chicks in the lower right corner is a raw whole chicken that looks like it came from a grocery store advertisement. Each item is placed so there is equal "white space" around it. The composition is balanced in its treatment of positive and negative space and the placement of color. The large image on the left gives it weight, but the intense yellow of the chicks in the middle and the corn on the right counter-balance it and create a pleasing arrangement.

R.C. performed under pressure. She had prepared for the Memory Collage Project by gathering some of the pictures earlier in the week. She even went so far as to search for and purchase frozen corn because its packaging was the "perfect" addition to her collage.

Conclusion

This artwork reflects careful placement of images, but without the evidence of her tense behavior and struggle in telling her oral story, I would never have guessed that creating this collage was so stressful. I know from my own experience, that the finished product often does not convey the long learning process required to create it.

During the interview, R.C. was relaxed and candid. When asked about using a life story for the project, she continued her tales of life on the farm and how she and her siblings would throw rotten eggs against the trees. She said her favorite part was "remembering" and she looked forward to sharing her collage with her children.

Narrative – C.C.

"Good Morning. I’m C.C. I’ve been a volunteer here for many years. I’m 74. I came here from Minnesota and my story begins in the late 60s or early 70s when our children were young. My husband and I were from Oklahoma. We grew up eating
Mexican food. Minnesota is not known for its tortillas and green chilies, so finding the ingredients for Mexican food was not always easy. One particular weekend we decided to have some Mexican food and we would drive down to West St. Paul where there was a Mexican community. There was a grocery store there. This particular Sunday when we drove down it was closed. It was some kind of church holiday or something. We don’t know, but the stores were closed so we were not able to get our Mexican tortillas. So, while we were sitting there in the car pondering what to do, my husband got out of the car to see when they might be open. He came back to the car and said, “Well, they are closed for the day!”

Meanwhile a car full of a Mexican family pulled up. And the woman from that car got out and approached my husband. She said, “Is there anything wrong?” He said, “Yes, we were hoping to buy some tortillas for our supper, but they’re closed.” She said, “Well, that’s no problem – I know how to make tortillas. Why don’t you come home with us and I’ll teach your wife how to make them.” So my husband came back to the car and said, “We’re going to go to that lady’s house and watch her make tortillas.” So we followed the man and his wife and about six children. In our car was my husband and I and our two children and a friend of my daughter’s. So, we followed them a few blocks down the street in this Mexican community. She invited us to come in and the children to play, so our girls played with the Mexican children. They were playing baseball. My husband visited with the father and I went back into the kitchen with the Mexican lady and she proceeded to get out her flour to make flour tortillas.

So she got out her flour. She had a big mixing bowl and she put in about 3 cups of flour, some salt, a little bit of lard... She put her hand into this can of lard and blended this all together and then when it was all mixed, she added a little warm water, a little bit at a time until it formed a ball. She kneaded this ball of flour until it got smooth. She divided it into circles about the size of a large plum. And then she’d take up a circle of dough and pat it between her hands until it got the size she thought was appropriate, then she would pull it. She’d put one hand under the tortilla and with the other hand begin to stretch until it got to be quite large - until it got to be about 8” across and then she turned it onto a large piece of black steel that she had put on her stove. And as this steel plate got very hot, she used that for her grill and she began to cook the tortillas on the grill.

She ended up making about 2 dozen of these. Before she was finished she had me practice with her. “Take a ball of dough and stretch it out to the size and then began to pull it out, thinner and thinner to just the right thickness and then fry it on the grill.” So, when we finished up all the dough that she had made, she wrapped them in waxed paper and gave them to me and said, “Now you have your tortillas for your supper.”

And I said, “Well let me pay you for the tortillas since I couldn’t buy them at the store and she said, “Well if you want to, but you can have them if you want to.” If I remember right, my husband reached his hand in his billfold and pulled out a five dollar bill to give her for the 2 dozen tortillas. So, we went home happy. We had to drive about 35 miles to our house on the river. We had a pot of chili made and some refried beans and put a salad together and sat there and ate until we were full of Mexican food. So after that, I didn’t have to go to Mexican Town for tortillas, I would just make them.”
Collage

C.C. brought in a variety of images to incorporate in her collage. A school picture of her daughter, a label from a can of diced green chilies, a photograph of her husband in his chef’s outfit. There was outside preparation in gathering these images. C.C. also used text from a magazine in addition to her hand labeling. Every object collaged has a descriptive label handwritten in marker. Even the label from the green chilies is labeled “cheese peppers”. In the lower left hand corner “1972” was written referring to the year of the event. Some of the images (their house in Minnesota and their daughter’s school picture are placed on an angle which connects the images to each other. Three large chili pepper shapes were cut from construction paper to also link the pictures together. Overlapping is used throughout the artwork which gives it a sense of depth. The photographs are all of a dark, subdued color, while the red chili peppers and the green chili label are bright. The placement suggests careful planning, but also a playful approach to the composition. The pointed shape of the red peppers acts like an arrow and invites your eye to explore the whole picture plane. In dead center, “You’all Come!” is hand written and represents the warmth of the memory.

C.C. had taken “a lot” of art classes. Her favorite part was “going through magazines”. She would have liked more time between the introduction and actual production. She said that when she began laying out her collage materials it was helpful to talk with others. She looks forward to sharing it with her children because, she said, they will remember the Mexican children.

Conclusions

C.C. considered herself a “volunteer” in the church group. Very capable and independent, she executed her collage and told her story with confidence. The details she shared of this day that happened thirty years ago are impressive. From reiterating the recipe for the tortillas to the conversations, this exchange of kindness and reciprocation between her family and the Mexican family was part of her life review. This event involved risk-taking and resulted in an act of generosity with a disregard for racial prejudice.

C.C. had experience working in other mediums and that must have instilled confidence because she experimented in this medium courageously.

Narrative - C.R.

“I’m C.R. I have drawn many things over the years so I wanted that in here. I’ve been making Christmas cards since 1976 except for two years. So, this is what the cactus and Cat in the Hat on this collage is about. The cactus is from ’98 and the Cat in the Hat is from ’99.”
Now, I've been around the automotive industry from even before I graduated from high school. I took an automotive course, a three-year course and I worked for Ford dealers over 15 years. I worked on the '65 Ford Mustang when it first came out in 1964. I was there when it first hit the streets in Binghampton, New York. And, later on I became a diagnostician. This has a lot of memories because there was one with real problems and I got to sort it out. I talked to Ford about it. Ford had to agree with me. And that's the picture here. From there and high school I went through the assembly line in Buffalo, New York and the picture over to the left is an automobile assembly line. That carries a lot of memories for me, too. On the corner on the right hand side it gives a full-view of the different systems and different things of the car. I could probably teach someone very many things about them since I've done this for many, many years.

Then, later on in my mid-life or mid-life crisis or something, I changed occupations. I became an inspector on the production line and so the picture in the left hand corner is not a leer, but it's the same view I had for many days and hours. And here is where they are putting this aircraft together in two sections. I had more hours in that section as an inspector than any other inspector of leer jets. There are various pictures of leer jets just to show you what a beautiful airplane it was and why I had so much fun. And.... I do have two kitties living with me now so as you can see, I'm a little partial to kitties. I love birds and animals and if you look closely at the picture of the cactus, bunny and three birds, there is also a mouse. I challenge people to find it rather than tell them where it is. Can you find the mouse?"

Collage

C.R. downloaded these images from the internet. Working with images on the computer has become an exciting past time for him and I think he was excited to have a use for the pictures. There is very little white space left on his matboard. The little bit there is, frames each picture with equal amounts of border. A large image of a car or plane is placed in each corner. The smaller pictures of leer jets and his Christmas cards fill in between. C.R. stated that his only concerns for the arrangement was to achieve a balance of pictures, specifically their color. There is a very symmetrical balance to the collage. His signature is printed in the upper right corner and signed in the lower middle. There was care taken in the craftsmanship.

Conclusions

C.R.'s story and collage represents his career accomplishments. The tone of his oral story reflected a sense of pride just on the verge of sounding full of himself. He told me he wanted me to sit with him when he made the recording because "I might ask him questions about the collage that he wouldn't think of". There is no mention of any specific people, but he does reference his two cats and his love for animals. When I talked to him after the memory collage was completed, he revealed that he had lost his wife three years ago and was just getting back into dating. He is finding it hard to give up his freedom. One might judge from his chosen narrative and visual collage that
personal relationships are not important. Yet, when I spoke with him at his home after the project, his family sounded extremely important to him. In fact, he was printing calendars using old family photographs to give out at a family reunion in New York. In his home, his collage was displayed right above his computer with his name tag from the Memory Collage exhibition hanging beside it.

**Narrative - D.O.B.**

“I am 78. This collage shows a picture of my grandmother, my mother and I when I was in the first grade. The map points out where we lived in East Orange, New Jersey. The school house is my school when I was in first grade. The mop is a .... Tells about a disaster that I had there that I’ve never gotten over thinking about. It stayed with me all these years. I wet my pants. The teacher told us to stand up and sing. I raised my hand and asked if I could go to the bathroom. She said “Sing first”. And we sang and we sang and we sang! All of a sudden, you know what, I had an accident. And the janitor came with a big mop to mop it upa dn the teacher made me stay by the radiator the rest of the morning.”

**Collage**

D.O.B. had created a miniature mop at home from a red pencil and yellow yarn to add to her collage. She also brought the black and white picture of her grandmother, mother and herself. The portion of the New Jersey map and pictures from *Life* magazines were chosen during the production time. Each picture has a handwritten label beneath it. “Me crying”, “My school” and even “Mopping up my “accident”’ clearly explain the story, just in case the visuals might not. The pictures are carefully glued down to give balance. She found each picture as needed to illustrate her story. There was not a concern for chronological order, so I assume the placement was based on wanting to create a pleasing combination. The diagonal placement of the colorful mop creates interest and breaks the monotony of the other vertical images.

**Conclusions**

Even though D.O.B. chose a very embarrassing memory to illustrate and share, she obviously has come to terms with it. The tone in her voice indicated that she almost found it pleasurable or healing to share this story. By the response from the audience, others had similar experiences and found her story not only entertaining, but also healing. When I contacted D.O.B. after the project, she no longer had her collage because it was at her daughter’s house in Phoenix. This story just may be one that her whole family has heard before.

**Narrative - M.D.**
Narrative - M.D.

"I married into a family of 17 children. There was a mixed marriage there, you know, two fathers. It was brought about by death. One parent had seven children and the other parent had five....and then they had five of their own, so it got to be a big family. My sister and I married into that same family. She married one step-brother and I married the other. They were mostly interested in just music. So that's what we grew up doing -- singing every song under the sun that was published. We sang every song we could get our hands on.

We lived in North Dakota and you didn't get the latest of everything, but we got all the old songs. And, of course we grew up knowing those. Our families knew those and the family we married into wanted to sing. Like my father and myself and the girlfriends I would be with, we'd go to basketball games because we lived in the country and we had long distances to travel. Whenever we got in the car, somebody started to sing and that was the way we traveled. We sang all the way to wherever we went and we sang all the way home. That was part of it and this picture up here of the keyboard was very important to one of my nieces and very important to one of my grandsons. And so on.

This was the children like to sing, too, so as they grew up they sang every Sunday school program and every church thing that was going on.

(I ask, "Were you surprised when you found a picture that exactly says that? You've got children singing and it makes me think of a church pew.")

No, I didn't think of that, we just had a bunch of singers.

(I said, "The open mouths, that's all you needed.")

And this one over here was to designate the snow and the fun it was to go sledding -- how fun it was to slide down the hill. I think these kids are singing, too. Well, that's all I found. Eventually it has grown into such a big family. The parents are all dead now. The next generation, which is where I fit in and all those other 16, 17, 13 kids got married. I don't know. I don't even know them all. At the last reunion, there were over 100. That's the last time I got acquainted with all the little ones.

("Was there a sing along?" I ask.)

Oh, yes. At that time it was mostly the older ones because the youngsters were third generation. This, of course, is what made me think it was the most important thing in our lives.

(I said, "I have to ask you, when you came in today were you already thinking of this memory or this story, or did you open up a magazine and see these pictures and you thought....Oh, I should tell about.....")

I opened up a magazine and that's the first picture I saw. I didn't know anything about what was going on today. Well, this was the most important thing in our lives. I mean it was our entertainment, you didn't have any "made-to-order" entertainment in those days. Someone played the piano, we sang and we had a band. Well, in a small farm community, you have who is there. My parents came in from Nebraska and everybody that married in, knew each other when they homesteaded and they all came together and they stayed together. That's about all I can think of."
Comments

When M.D. began her story she seemed a little stiff, but as she spoke, she grew more comfortable. She asked me to ask her questions, but in reality, she knew exactly what she wanted to say about the collage.

Collage

Even though her collage is very minimal and appears to be made of pictures from the same “spread” in a *Life* magazine, she had found pictures that suited a very meaningful theme for her. The images are black and white photos of children sleeping/eating, sledding and a child playing the keyboards. Each one was shot from a different angle which creates awkward perspective. The stark, simple images cut in large oval, organic forms, create an artwork with a postmodern appearance.

Conclusions

Even while I interviewed her as she had requested, I had that feeling that my questions were not enhancing her recording. I did not seem to ever “get it right”, so my responses or my interpretations needed to be corrected. In other words, the flow between us was not there. M.D. was not at all inhibited like she seemed at first. I found that I really over-compensated for what I thought was her shyness and hesitation. She thoroughly enjoyed the process and seemed to respond positively to the spontaneity of the project being offered.
Appendix F

THE MEMORY COLLAGE PROJECT
(modified version)

Objectives:
Participants will recall an important memory from their lives. Using a variety of materials, they will represent key visual elements to create a collage. An oral narrative will be tape recorded to accompany it.

Materials Needed:
Scissors, glue sticks, matboard (cut to background size), pencils, markers, collage materials; such as, Life magazines from the 50s and 60s, travel, home, gardening, sport magazines, maps, cardboard, fabric, yarn, etc. (For tape-recording their oral story, a tape cassette and recorder with microphone will be necessary.)

Number of Classes: 3 sessions.
1. Introduction (1 hour)
2. Production (1 1/2 hours)
3. Closure/Storytelling (1 hour)

DAY 1 - Introduction:
Begin by explaining how important personal stories are...without them families cannot pass down history and an understanding of their experiences. There may be someone in the group that is recognized as the “storyteller”. Storytelling is a skill that can be developed, but everyone has stories to tell and sometimes even the most mundane event can become a fascinating story to the listener. A fun result of participating in this project is that we all get to know each other better. By creating a memory collage in both a visual and oral form they will have two unique recordings of this story to share with a relative or friend.

Instruction:
Share an example of a memory collage. If possible, have a tape-recording or the oral story that was illustrated. Explain the images the artist chose and the importance of the placement for creating an interesting composition. Displaying examples of collages made by artists such as Romare Bearden, Miriam Shapiro and Henri Matisse would demonstrate a variety of approaches to the collage medium.

Discussion Ideas
When referring to the collages of Romare Bearden, it may be appropriate to ask the group questions regarding the images he included.

- What kind of memories has he represented?
- What kind of emotional response does he want from the viewer?
- How did he achieve that?
- What kinds of memories come to your mind?
• How would you represent those ideas?
  (It is crucial that you establish trust before too many invasive questions are asked.
  Some familiarity with the individual group members would encourage
  participation.)
This project should be introduced a week, or so, in advance so that participants have the
opportunity to prepare ideas and materials. Ask everyone to bring in any materials that
they would like to incorporate into their collage; such as, photos (can be xeroxed so the
original is not damaged), memorabilia and anything else they think would be appropriate.
Reassure them that some materials will be provided.
Provide a flyer reminding them of the project and ideas for materials to bring in. (See
Appendix B)

**DAY 2 – Production:**
Room Setup: Have all examples of collages readily available. Stacks of magazines, glue
sticks and scissors should be arranged at each table. Make sure there is easy accessibility
to all seats to accommodate walkers, etc.

Show example of Memory Collage shared during the last meeting. Ask how many
people brought in pictures and memorabilia to use in their collage. At this point, it may
be effective to ask if anyone was unable to find pictures or does not feel confident about
the project. Putting out a public announcement for help with locating images may
increase interaction and be enjoyable for others, as well. Attempt to eliminate any stress
at this point by pairing those unsure about the project with someone or acknowledge their
frustration and arrange to meet with them once the project begins. Clearly explain
availability of materials.

**Demonstration/Instruction:**
Choose an approach that will be comfortable for you.

1) Describe a memory and have previously gathered resources to help illustrate it.
   By interacting with the group, you could make decisions about what to include
   and where to place it. By making decisions “out loud”, concepts about
   composition, symmetry, contrast and creating interest could be discussed. Other
   topics to discuss are overlapping, text and extending beyond the board. (Be sure
to demonstrate how to use a glue stick because it may be new for some
participants.)

2) Pre-select some images and ask for volunteers to help create a story based on
   those images. Proceed with interacting about the decision-making process. This
   may assist in encouraging a flexible approach to the project.

3) Ask if there is anyone who brought in some pictures or items that would like
   some suggestions. Proceed with a dialogue about the decision-making process
   with this individual, asking for suggestions from the group.

(Be sensitive to any anxiety expressed and try to alleviate it as soon as possible.
Remember, participation is voluntary so be attentive to everyone’s needs.)
**DAY 3 - Closure/Storytelling:**
Display artwork with artists' names in a space that has good accessibility. Allow time for viewing, self-reflection as well as recognition among peers. Allow as many people a chance to tell their story as possible. Set up a discreet way of recording the storyteller (hidden microphone?)
Making a comfortable seating arrangement is important for the listeners. Invite audience participation, by encouraging questions and comments about the collages and their oral stories. It may be necessary to take a break to allow everyone a chance to stretch their legs at some point. If some people did not get a chance to share their story that wished to, make arrangements for storytelling at a future time.
References


