

ED 404 014

PS 024 997

AUTHOR Loewen, Jerry  
 TITLE Intergenerational Learning: What If Schools Were Places Where Adults and Children Learned Together?  
 PUB DATE 96  
 NOTE 45p.  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Age Differences; Age Groups; Apprenticeships; Children; Community Programs; Community Services; Cooperative Learning; \*Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; Experiential Learning; \*Intergenerational Programs; Learning Activities; \*Mixed Age Grouping; Older Adults; Program Development; School Community Programs; Service Learning; Student Development  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Intergenerational Learning; \*Intergenerational Relationship

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the definition and practice of intergenerational learning programs, and attempts to determine the characteristics of successful and meaningful programs of this type. The first section defines intergenerational learning and states its purpose: to bring young and old together for the purpose of learning from one another, under the assumption that the learning process never ends. The second section discusses the justifications of intergenerational learning by examining studies and existing programs. The third section examines service learning and apprenticeships as intergenerational learning models. The fourth section describes the characteristics of successful intergenerational programs and classifies them as curriculum-based, relationship-based, reciprocal relations, community-based, and authentic work. The fifth section describes the successful program processes of reflection and realistic goal setting. The sixth section examines the planning process and its importance to successful programs. The seventh section presents the report's conclusions--that intergenerational programs can be both academic and communal, intellectual and personal, and that although intergenerational learning as an end in itself will not teach as much as conventional methods, it can teach all involved that learning and development should be viewed as a constant, life-long priority. Contains 51 references. (SD)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

PS

ED 404 014

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.  
 Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

# INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING: WHAT IF SCHOOLS WERE PLACES WHERE ADULTS AND CHILDREN LEARNED TOGETHER?

**JERRY LOEWEN  
KLINGENSTEIN FELLOWSHIP  
1995-1996**

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Pearl Rock

Kans

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

PS 024997

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction: What is intergenerational learning?	page 1
II. Justifications: Why initiate and expand upon intergenerational learning?	
Societal Need for Intergenerational Learning: is there one?	page 1
Attitudinal Changes from Intergenerational Learning: are they real?	page 4
III. Learning in Intergenerational Settings: How does it work?	
Service Learning: A Step Beyond Community Service, but not Far Enough	page 8
Apprenticeships: Time Tested Intergenerational Learning	page 10
Hisotry	page 10
Intellectual Development	page 12
Personal Development	page 15
Teacher as Master	page 16
Apprenticeships and School Settings	page 16
Human Development: A Life long Process	page 18
Adolescent Development	page 18
Adult Development	page 22
IV. Characteristics:	
What do successful intergenerational programs look like?	page 25
V. Process: What goes on at every meeting?	page 33
VI. Planning: What needs to happen before the program can start?	page 34
VII. Conclusion: What has been learned?	page 36
VIII. Appendix	
#1 What Intergenerational Learning Can Do For Adolescent Development	page 37
#2 Teacher As Coach	page 38
#3 Teacher As Master	page 39
VIII. Bibliography	page 40

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING?

Schools are intergenerational learning centers. The young and the old(er) come together to learn. At least, that is the hope. Intergenerational learning should not mean that adults and adolescents come together so that only adolescents can learn. It should not mean that adolescents gather in great numbers in the presence of adults, gathered in small numbers, to learn what the adults say they should learn. Intergenerational learning should not be the mere supervision of the younger by the older as the young attempt to chart a path into adulthood by themselves.

Intergenerational learning programs, however, should bring young and old together in similar numbers so that each may get to know the other, see the other in action and learn from one another. Intergenerational programs are built on the assumptions that human development and learning is a life-long process. Finding responsible and enthusiastic adult models of these assumptions will influence adolescent learning in a far more positive manner than much of what is done in our current intergenerational school settings. In this way, intergenerational learning is not the end goal of this project, but rather one of the best vehicles to promote greater learning and understanding in all who participate in these exchanges.

In an *Education Week* editorial, "Involving Older Adults in Schools," Jane Angelis and Lisa Wathen pose three questions, of which the answers will dictate the future of intergenerational learning in American education. 1) How can schools involve older adults in a way that leads to a permanent mechanism for intergenerational ventures? 2) How can schools maximize the involvement of older adults so that programs are meaningful and make an impact? 3) How can educators reach an understanding that intergenerational programs are the next logical step in education reform? (Angelis and Wathen)

## SOCIETAL NEED FOR INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING: IS THERE ONE?

Much of the rationale for intergenerational programs in educational literature is based on a societal need and the historical evolution of generational separation. The case is made by many that the generations are much farther apart today in spatial, emotional and cultural terms than in the "good old days" gone by. Starting from the demise of the one room school house, age groups

began to be institutionally segregated. Soon thereafter, specialized agencies and professions arose to cater to and further characterize these age groups. Boys and Girls Scouts helped youngsters develop into "valuable" adults. Pediatrics defined the differences between generations in medical terms. The Social Security Act of 1935 added to the notion that the demands of the generations were quite different. Medicare and the Older Americans Act furthered this separation. Finally, retirement villages and the swelling ranks of the American Association of Retired Persons solidified the elderly on one end of the generational spectrum. MTV and the advertisement industry's discovery (or creation) of "Youth Culture," entrenched the younger generations of our society at the opposite end of this spectrum.

So what social evidence of *need* has appeared because of this historical trend toward isolated age groups? Robert Putnam recently modified the idea of "social capital" as a measurement of this isolation in his article, "Bowling Alone." The dramatic decline in civic organizations, unions, and yes, even bowling leagues is evidence, in his view, that "social trust" is at an "all time low" and that modern society is dangerously fractured. (Putnam) Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, claims that "we have created a horizontally layered culture in which people are separated by age." (Boyer). Statistics of geographic mobility are exhibited as proof of this isolation. Between 1980 and 1985, 39.9% of all Americans moved from one home to another. Only 4.9% of that figure is represented by the elderly. One possible inference from this is that younger family members are leaving parents and grandparents alone in their "hometowns" (Cogwill).

Theories of aging have developed which demonstrate a *need* for the elderly to be more connected with society. The Disengagement theory of aging states that society phases out those members who hold it back from operating smoothly. The elderly, therefore, require meaningful activities as an essential element of their own happiness and well being. Because this interaction with the younger members of society does not take place regularly, the elderly may be perceived to suffer from mass discrimination. From these theories, a subculture of the aged evolves, pushing the elderly further out of "mainstream" society (O'Reilly). Comparisons to non industrialized

societies point out that the elderly are greatly valued because the knowledge they possess is still of great value to the younger members of society. Thus, the wisdom they hold keeps them actively involved in society. The rapid technological advances of our industrialized society, however, makes much of the elderly's knowledge less applicable to younger generations.

The increased assumption of an American "youth culture" as a societal force with a life of its own is also seen as *evidence* of the widening gap between young and old. Francis Ianni, a Teachers College professor, traces the evolution of "youth culture" to the abandonment of parental responsibilities and the demise of communities where there was "a loose collection of shared understandings that limited the variability of permissible behavior" (Ianni). In the absence of these communities, and along with the growing belief that the youth could be better understood by experts of the "culture", public institutions were granted greater responsibilities for the young. Television was hoisted up by many as a perpetuator and instigator of these separate cultures of young and old. It homogenized life's experiences and exposed children to topics and images which many were not emotionally prepared to handle. The "baby sitting" nature of television was linked to the decrease in parental influence over the young. Finally, the stereotyped versions of the young and old, played out in commercials, situation comedies and movies, seemed to be institutionalized by this medium.

By 1965, the Foster Grandparents Program was initiated to help cope with the perceived national problem of children adrift in society, without the guidance of parents or other significant adults. A White House Conference on Intergenerational Cooperation was held in 1981, where it was proclaimed that, "the development of positive attitudes of younger persons toward older persons is preliminary to the acceptance of older persons as vital and contributing members of the community." (Sparling page 46) This led to the call for "strategies for linking individuals over the age of sixty with youths under the age of twenty-five" (Sparling page 46). Ernest Boyer added to this urgency, "The health of any culture depends on the vital interactions among at least three generations" (Boyer). Much of our schools' commitments to community service as a means of helping the elderly in our communities and bringing young and old together has its origins in this

public call to action. Jane Angelis, a recurrent name in this field of research, summed up the wide ranging and nearly all encompassing rationale and intent of the movement: to overcome the social isolation and political and social strain between generations and to address the abundance of social problems. Intergenerational programs can capture our deep desire for community.

Intergenerational programs are the microstructure through which we can each learn how the other half lives. (Angelis 1992)

While I find it interesting and useful to consider the context within which the research on intergenerational programs has been conducted and policy enacted, it is clear that nearly all of its rationale is based on theory and opinion generalized for an entire society and played out in the popular media. In Ms. Angelis' summary statement above, for instance, to who's "deep desire for community" is she referring? Do all members of society possess this desire? In my research there is alarmingly little statistical evidence to support the "strain between generations" or the "abundance of social problems" related to this issue. Whose problems, whose strains, which generations? The traditional use of the "other half" is to be recognizable no longer as the poor or the rich, but now as the 'other' generations.

There is great momentum in justifying intergenerational learning programs upon these social *needs* and it would be historically and culturally logical to do so. It would not, however, provide a strong enough rationale to permanently and programatically incorporate intergenerational programs into our institutions of learning.

#### ATTITUDINAL CHANGES FROM INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING: ARE THEY REAL?

If the explanations of a societal need are not strong enough to justify intergenerational learning, what of quantifiable data? By measuring changes that occur in people's attitudes before and after intergenerational activities, hard evidence could demonstrate the benefits of these interchanges.

As I focused on the literature that documented what actually happens when the young and old are brought together in programmatic ways, I discovered that there were many detailed accounts of programs but only a limited number of studies that accurately and critically analyzed the results of these interactions. The handful of results I used to make my conclusions were based on studies of programs conducted in affiliation with schools and elderly organizations. Therefore, the children are all of school age and the elderly participants are universally categorized as over sixty years old. These studies measured the perceptions each generation held about the other generation involved before and after participation in the program by means of standardized assessment tools and statistical analysis. While these findings are not earth shattering, they do provide useful information for planning and implementing intergenerational programs.

**1. The greater the number of contacts children have with the elderly, the more positive is their perception of the elderly prior to beginning any intergenerational program.** In three studies where this data was collected, those children who could identify numerous elderly people with whom they interacted held more positive feelings about the elderly in general than did those who had few or no contacts with elderly people (Sparling, Parnell, and Chapman). In comparing children with living grandparents to those without, the quantity of elderly people in a youth's life had a greater correlation to positive perceptions of the elderly than did the mere presence of grandparents. The extent of these contacts, however, was noted to be quite small. In one study of 180 children, aged three to eleven, only 39 of them could identify an elderly person they knew outside of their family (Seefeldt 1977). In one of these three studies, which involved elderly helpers for younger recipients and younger helpers for elderly recipients, the authors summarized without numerical support that while the elderly had even less contact with children than did the children with the elderly, the elderly's initial perceptions about the children was significantly higher than the corresponding perceptions of the children.

**2. All studies showed a positive change in children's attitudes toward the elderly after these programs.** Calculated as mean scores on perception assessments and semantic



differential tests, all the studies I reviewed showed some positive change in attitudes toward the elderly.

**3. A slightly greater positive change in children's perceptions of the elderly came about in programs where there was interaction between young and old compared to settings where only instruction about the elderly was given .** In comparing three interactive programs with one classroom-only program, the change in attitudes toward the elderly held by children was more positive in those settings where children could interact with the older people.

**4. Children's willingness to participate in future programs with the elderly is not necessarily strengthened by the participation in an intergenerational program despite the fact that their attitudes toward the elderly are more positive.** The Olejnik study noted that of the 250 participants in the experimental group, there was a drop from 59% to 54% who responded favorably to the statement "I like to be with old people" after the program was completed. Likewise, a drop from 61% to 53% was noted on positive responses to the statement "When I am with old people, I feel good." This study did conclude that these same children, on average, did hold a more positive attitude toward the elderly after the program than before. In the Chapman study, the same youth helpers who were documented to have had significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly after the program than before were shown to be less interested in working with the elderly after the completion of the program than before it had begun.

From the data and studies I examined, I came up with several hypotheses which were either not pursued by other studies or were not adequately supported in those that did include them. These statements deserve to be examined more closely since they could significantly influence the design and ultimate effectiveness of any intergenerational program.

Whites, as compared to African Americans, hold more positive perceptions about the elderly prior to such programs. I found conflicting evidence for this claim. The Glass study,

with close to 400 ninth grade participants from throughout North Carolina, noted this difference but did not provide the numerical support. They did not break down the ethnicity of the experiential or control group. The Aday study, which concentrated on thirty-nine African American juniors and seniors in high school, showed initial perceptions of the elderly scores of 73.95 on a 20 to 100 scale and 91.02 on a 20 to 140 scale (the higher scores indicate more positive perceptions). These figures are somewhat higher than initial perceptions scores I studied where race was not mentioned or played no significant role in the interpretation of the data.

Boys hold stronger negative stereotypes about the elderly than do girls prior to beginning these programs. This assertion was made in only one study (Olejnik). It does deserve future analysis since these initial feelings could easily shade the outcome of any program and should be factored into the design of programs.

There is an inverse relation between positive attitude change and increased age and grade level. The Olejnik study found that after the completion of a program where the elderly and the students shared the school cafeteria for two months, eighth graders showed the least positive change in attitudes among the students from grades sixth through eighth. The positive change noted at each grade level rose from the eighth down through the sixth. This seems to support logical thought that the longer one holds certain ideas, be they stereotypes or not, the more difficult it will be to change them.

There is no significant change in the elderly's perception of the youth after the completion of these programs. This information was not documented carefully by any of the researchers. One report suggested that the richer and more varied life experiences of the elderly leave less room for experiences to change their minds. This is worth investigating since it could have a large impact on the willingness of the elderly to volunteer or to continue.

However, these attitudinal findings are no firmer ground on which to build my case for intergenerational programs than is social need. Research in the area of attitude formation or change, as reflected upon by Columbia Sociology Professor Herbert Gans, is "psychological, or

based on the laboratory model of psychologists, in which people are asked to react to simple, and often mindless, statements, which catch nothing of the rich quality of human interaction." (Gans 1995) Gans goes on to point out that "psychologists seem to see (attitudes) as objects that get attached to people's brains after the brains have been subjected to a program, or a lab test, or what have you. Sociologists have a different conception of attitudes, seeing them as statements that people make in reaction to a stimulus, and having no lasting power beyond that. We know that different questions evoke different attitudes...We know that behavior is often unaffected by attitudes and that the latter may be adapted to be consistent with the former" (Gans). Harvard's Chris Argyris, as quoted in Peter Senge's The Fifth Discipline, adds to this understanding: "Although people do not always behave congruently with their espoused theories [what they say], they do behave congruently with their theories-in-use [their mental models]." (Senge p 175)

Attitudinal change studies, then, do not provide the hard evidence which could convince schools to integrate intergenerational learning into their curriculum. What is needed for lasting and effective school reform is the proof that intergenerational projects can lead to greater learning for adolescent students. There are many successful programs where both the elderly (or other non-school age generations) and the students learn more together than they could alone. By identifying what makes these programs successful and how they help people learn, schools will be able to see that intergenerational learning is not a community service add-on, but a more effective learning strategy than what is now in place.

### SERVICE LEARNING: A STEP BEYOND COMMUNITY SERVICE, BUT NOT FAR ENOUGH

Intergenerational learning programs are often viewed as community service ventures where the youth are serving the elderly, gaining a sense of responsibility toward their community while finding varying levels of personal fulfillment. My vision of intergenerational learning is not one that belittles this model, but is one which attempts to add to these qualities by maximizing the learning potential in these interchanges. Responsibility to community and intrinsic rewards

derived from service to others can still be products of this learning environment. Service learning attempts to do this.

Community service programs often seem to be taking time from classes to address legitimate but curricularly disconnected issues of the larger community. Service learning programs attempt to design community learning experiences which are directly connected to curricular objectives. Being more involved with the larger community allows students to enter into the community of practice where academic skills are being put to use by adults in the "real world." The interdependence of people and their on-going learning can be observed, often in stark contrast to the autonomous nature of "school learning." Jean Lave and Estienne Wenger refer to this as "socially mediated knowledge" where "learning is not merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership" (Lave and Wegner p 50). John Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning has much to do with the effectiveness of service learning as there is a continual interaction between understanding and experience in these arrangements. Unfortunately, there is often little or no meaningful interaction between the two in much of our classroom teaching. For instance, tests in community settings become much more than abstract tools of group assessment. Demonstrating and truly applying shared knowledge to a relevant problem serves as a more motivating and accurate means to assess learning.

Just as the learning environment changes, so too does the teaching environment in a service learning project. The method of teaching and the assumptions teachers bring to the setting must be different. Great attention is paid to the newcomer status of the learner. How to bring these newcomers (adults or adolescents, or both in intergenerational programs) along the learning curve influences the design of these programs in a far greater way than in many school settings. Skills are needed to participate in the task at hand. Abstract instruction and imagined manipulations no longer suffice. The contextualized instruction of skills and tools allows for much greater understanding of these skills' and tools'. The teacher is often a participant at the site, and a teacher back in school. The renewed perspective of the learner helps the teacher more effectively design future and follow up activities. Situations demanding didactic instruction become more apparent.

Skills or knowledge which are needed at a particular point can be given at that point. The gap between need and learning is minimal. Similarly, the balance between instruction of theory and learning from experience becomes one much more conducive to demonstrable learning than in most classrooms.

Lauren Resnick's work in identifying the gaps between in-school learning and out-of-school learning offers great support to service learning. At its best, learning "steps back from the everyday world in order to consider and evaluate it, yet is engaged with that world as the object of reflection and reasoning (Resnick p19). The engagement with the everyday world should not be a world absent of generational variety. Making students aware of the reality of the everyday world means involving them with adults, just as making adults aware of that same world means involving them with adolescents. In this way, all community connected learning becomes intergenerational. The following discussion of apprenticeships illustrates how learning can best be accomplished in intergenerational settings.

#### APPRENTICESHIPS: TIME TESTED INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Apprenticeships can be defined as matching someone who is proficient in a skill, usually an adult, with someone who is interested in learning that skill, usually an adolescent. Apprenticeships have made for effective learning arrangements throughout much of human history because 1) the process is contextually rich; 2) feed-back from the master is frequent and immediate; 3) the end product is a socially valued creation; and 4) the learning is holistic. Howard Gardner, in his book The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach, advocates the use of apprenticeship learning in schools because it teaches in ways that most children learn best. (Gardner p121)

#### HISTORY OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships started as a practical means of perpetuating the family vocation. Primarily fathers would teach sons the family business while at the same time 'educating' him in other

matters important to the family or community. Traditional schooling, then, was not needed as vocational and social education was being met within the family structure. Landmarks of growth, both social and professional were incorporated into these apprenticeships. Even as educational institutions took over much of the social education, most vocational learning in the pre-industrial days was accomplished in apprenticeship arrangements.

Apprenticeships faded from the American educational landscape for several reasons. Most practically, the industrial revolution changed the nature of many of the crafts which were traditionally nurtured through apprenticeships. Crafts which are fairly static in relation to their skills, technology and tools are best suited for apprenticeships. Fast changing work conditions made skills fostered over many generations immediately obsolete. Second, apprenticeships presented the potential for too many diverse standards of quality in the marketplace. Much in the way bureaucracy was created to combat corruption, standardization and certification through educational institutions could guarantee consistent quality in the job place. Most significantly perhaps, the institutionalization of schools could not tolerate the unpredictable pace of learning, the variance in teaching methods and the variety of learning called for by apprenticeship learning. The logistics and philosophy of American education did not match apprenticeship learning's main tenants.

Three fairly recent attempts to incorporate apprenticeship models into formal schooling have achieved only limited success and limited support. The Foxfire programs were heavily based on the experiential learning encouraged by John Dewey. These programs had students working at "adult" tasks such as designing and publishing magazines and books. The learning and teaching was heavily contextualized in the pursuit of their publications and the 'product' was a real one, valued by the students and the community of subscribers. Unlike a true apprenticeship program, however, the students were not in frequent contact with masters of this craft, adults. Therefore, they missed out on the "direct observation punctuated by overt instruction" from the master which could have added even more 'real' knowledge to these real-world activities (Hamilton p 46).

The lack of adult connection also leaves these students operating from their limited personal or collaborative experience without the added perspective brought by those with long experience and expertise.

The Learning Web, designed by Ivan Illich, matched students who were interested in specific skills, crafts or occupations with caring adults in the community who were proficient in those areas. These pairings were created as after-school or weekend programs, completely apart from the school curriculum. Illich saw these programs as more of a replacement for schools rather than an add on to them. His main intent was to "empower students to make their own decisions about their own learning" (Hamilton p 47). Despite the strong intergenerational relationships created, the full value of this program was not realized due to its extracurricular standing.

Lastly, Experience Based Career Education (EBCE) was a program created under the Nixon Administration which attempted to offer career guidance in classroom settings. At their best, these programs connected an entire year's curriculum to the job place by integrating discipline-specific learning to the workplace and careers students were exploring. In the end, however, it became clear that the classroom could not adequately duplicate the work place environment. The rich contextual learning environment present in apprenticeship models was missing.

Eventhough traditional apprenticeships do not appear appropriate for the demands of modern educational needs, there are many reasons to incorporate the key elements of apprenticeship learning into our educational systems. I have categorized these elements and their benefits into two broad and interdependent areas of adolescent development: intellectual development (academic learning) and personal development.

### INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT FROM APPRENTICESHIPS

Prior to the industrial revolution, apprenticeships were so widely utilized because the novice subjects *learned* in this environment. If learning had not occurred consistently, the immediate pressures of the marketplace would have forced the adults to devise another learning

environment. The pressures of modern society and the marketplace ultimately forced us to abandon nearly all apprenticeships and change our educational system. Our reforms, however, did not incorporate many of the time-tested attributes of learning from this older system. Adults with mastery in various crafts, talents and habits of mind can revitalize these aspects if we can recruit a significant number of them into our schools.

Apprenticeships are contextually rich. The student observes the skill and discipline in practice. Observation serves as the knowledge base by which the novice begins the same work as the master. The master only punctuates this observation to offer overt instruction *when it is needed*. Observation leads quickly to doing. The majority of the learning in apprenticeships is experiential; hands on practice with the exact process and skills needed. Theory is only brought in as it is beneficial to the completed product. Tools are only introduced and demonstrated in the learning process as they are needed. The master and the novice can effectively communicate in a language natural to the craft. These "first order symbolizations" (Gardner p 123) may include drawings, gestures and symbols which only have meaning within that experience, but which are far more helpful in the accomplishment of the task than formal language. More formal communication is introduced when it is needed in the context of the experience. The novice embarks on a path of learning with its only predetermination being the ultimate mastery of the craft. Mastery is not judged solely by the 'product,' but by the practical implementation of the skill. Innovation and creativity, along with the mastered skills make for the greatest mastery. The novice moves along this path, often working with others of various skill levels, meeting certain benchmarks of an increasingly complex nature and climbing the hierarchy toward mastery. This process is a long and active one invested in deep understanding and demonstrable learning.

Feedback is immediate and frequent. There are many names given to the adult in an apprenticeship-like environment. Teacher, coach, tutor, mentor and master are but a few. All of these titles, at their best, connote an adult actively supervising and offering feedback to those aspiring to learn. The feedback is immediate and specified to the accomplishment, insight, mistake or misconception at hand. Without any lag between a budding misconception and its



correction, inaccurate models are not given time to settle into the adolescent's mind. What misconceptions may have formed can be reconciled with this individual attention offered in the context of the learning process. Assessments can also be gained by the novice in immediate and meaningful ways. Whether it is the comments of a master in that craft or the "test of the street" to see if your product 'sells' in the market place, the novice is rarely unaware of his or her progress. The master, coach, teacher or mentor is not just a practitioner of a particular craft, but someone who is deeply invested in the future of that craft. To fail at teaching this craft is to weaken its future.

Apprenticeships teach socially valued crafts. Both the product and the process of the interchange is authentic to the master, to the novice and to the public. If any one of these three constituents felt the end product of the apprenticeship was not relevant to their needs or values, the relationship could not support itself. The simple fact that this craft exists in the adult world and is valued in the marketplace or in society gives it immediate credibility among adolescents. The 'realness' of the craft is dramatized even further as that skilled practitioner actively passes his or her knowledge on to the novice. Lastly, the novice knows that people are successfully practicing that craft in the adult world, giving rise to a realistic goal and motivation to 'master' the skills inherent in that craft.

Apprenticeships teach holistically. The novice can see the piece of work at its present stage and the evolution into the whole by observing and actively taking part in the process of the craft. Traditional apprenticeships would also have novices at various skill levels working together under the same master. Students could help one another, looking back on their progress and looking forward to the progress yet to come. By learning the complexity of the craft, apprentices can see how various inputs result in various end products. The ability to adjust and integrate these variables is a habit of mind which will pay off tremendously in all aspects of learning and life in general. Peter Senge refers to this as Systems Thinking, where we learn to appreciate the non-linear nature of learning thereby developing a greater recognition of the causes and effects of many variables influencing our ultimate goals (Senge p 6-7). In this light, apprenticeships do not teach

repetitive mastery of a craft, but prepare a novice to think of the 'what ifs' through practice and habits of mind.

#### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships have long been valued for essential matching of young and old. While skills for a certain vocation necessitated these relationships, the instruction of life skills and the guided exposure to the world of adulthood served, perhaps, a greater purpose. Adolescents need to be involved in the world of powerful adults and the work of important people. Adolescents also need to see models of adults worthy of emulation. The master of a viable craft that is of interest to the novice is certainly one worthy of an adolescent's emulation. The adolescent is motivated to learn, in its most inclusive sense, by the connection to an emulated adult. Just as the master wants to strengthen the future of his or her craft by passing on the skills of the craft, he or she is just as motivated to see the profession carried into the future by moral and healthy adults. Erikson referred to this as a "generative" need of the adult, vital to their healthy development. As masters guide their novices toward mastery using benchmark projects or activities, many adolescents come to view these as rites of passage in their own personal development. A goal was set, guidance was given and utilized, and growth was realized. The competence an adolescent feels, whether in the task itself or development it represents, is vital to his or her emotional growth. The novice also experiences a socially shared experience, full of the support and interdependence so important to an adolescent's emerging image of the way the world of adults work. The easily duplicated environment of the master's craft established in order to instruct novices makes it possible for the learning to include the non-routine and the "what-if" scenarios. The preparation for break downs develops one's powers of adaptiveness, equipping an adolescent well for the unforeseen twists and turns of adult life.

## TEACHER AS MASTER

What if the teachers in our schools were put into positions to act and be regarded more like adults? For far too long, teachers in our schools have not been regarded by adolescents as 'adults' who do important things in the 'real world.' Deborah Meier sees too many teachers as masters of a game which has very little resemblance to the game of real life. While teachers tell students that school prepares them for life, the few similarities they do see between the two worlds are rarely put into practice in the school world. She also sees teachers lacking experience and reflection on what the 'real game' is. If this were not damaging enough to the image of teachers as powerful adults, Meier outlines the regular public beating their vocation takes. To be a lover of books or an "intellectual" is hardly held on high in our society. (Meier p 19) If teachers, however, were models of active involvement in pursuit of intense emotional and intellectual interest, students would be more likely to see education as meaningful and these teachers as adults worthy of emulation. Gardner would like to see teachers involved in projects where they keep track of their progress and reflect on it in public ways. These teachers would be offering "strategic feedback" to their students in a structure which also allows peers to help one another (Gardner p 241). If teachers held more authority and exercised it in ways that made meaningful differences for their students, adolescents would have more immediate models of skilled and caring adults in action.

Even if our teachers were more frequently regarded as adults and worthy of emulation, we need much more of the real world represented in our classrooms and in our learning. In the spirit of the belief that "it takes an entire village to raise a child," a diverse force of powerful adults needs to be recruited to work on important things with our students for the benefit of all those involved.

## APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE SCHOOL SETTING

Much of the work I concentrated on from Stephen Hamilton, Howard Garder, Lauren Resnick and Deborah Meier focused on school reform in light of the attributes of apprenticeship learning. In addition to recruiting more adults into our schools, they also see the expanded and

more valued roles of teachers as a means of utilizing the various attributes of apprenticeships. A summary of those observations is presented below.

<b>APPRENTICESHIP TEACHING IS:</b>	<b>SCHOOL TEACHING IS:</b>
contextually rich	abstract and out of context
devoted to observation of the practice	devoted to thinking about the practice
observation as knowledge base	classroom experience as knowledge base
experiential, situation-specific learning	detached , generalized learning
holistic, systems perspective	discipline-based, linear
introduce and utilize tools as needed	pure thought stressed, tools taught for later use
innovation as aspect of mastery	standardization as measure of mastery
performance based assessment	standardized tests as assessment
socially shared learning	independent learning
long term learning, advance when ready at benchmark locations	short term exposure to many topics, advance at predetermined time
immediate feedback	delayed feedback
feedback focused on goal	feedback focused on assignment
teacher as skilled practitioner (model)	teacher teaches about a craft
authentic product	curricular objectives
activity from the adult world	activities of the school world
minimal adult to adolescent ratio allows for guidance	adult to adolescent ratios allowing only supervision
adaptiveness and integration stressed	standardized and predictability stressed

Perhaps the most utilized version of the apprenticeship model is the coach. The best coaches take a group of novices as they are at varying skill levels and design an environment where they can learn from one another as well as from the coach. The coach is a master of the game as a participant, observer, and/or a strategist, and this talent is constantly modeled for the players. The coach frequently exposes the players to models of high performance which they can observe. Practical skills are practiced in the context in which they will be used. Theory is introduced only when it can be absorbed and when it can be utilized. The product of the effort is real and valued, as is the assessment of those skills. Feedback is constant, taking many forms from direct conversation to video tape. While the means of motivation vary wildly among the best coaches, there is no mistaking their investment in the game and in their players. Coaches are also perhaps

the best model of intergenerational learning programs. More effective teaching and greater learning in our schools will occur if more teachers take on a teaching-as-coaching perspective in their classrooms and if we can recruit more adults to help coach in and out of those classrooms.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A LIFE LONG PROCESS

What if more adults were in our schools, showing adolescents what the work and habits of adults in the outside world looks like? What if more adolescents were involved in the continuing development of adults? How would this influence the personal development of these adolescents and adults? Given that adolescents have developmental 'needs' which can be assisted by the interaction with responsible and caring adults, and that adults also have developmental needs which can be assisted by the interaction with actively involved adolescents, intergenerational learning programs can be designed which benefit both adult and adolescent.

Human development implies that we are developing in observable and not-so-observable ways well beyond adolescence and throughout our lives. Adolescence may be the most intensive period of this development. The issues facing adolescents are well known and widely discussed. Social institutions, however, have not acted on this knowledge. We do not frequently design schools and other social experiences around the goal of helping adolescents effectively deal with these issues. As Deborah Meier puts it, "we have abandoned adolescents to a world bereft of powerful adults...where adult values do not have a fighting chance."(Meier p 18) The result is that as Francis Ianni of Teachers College believes, we are sending our children to schools where "teens are left to rationalize competing and conflicting ideologies without adult assistance."(Ianni p 675) Intergenerational learning programs can offer some of this assistance, and more.

### ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Identity, whether we believe it is forged, defined, discovered, based on independence or interdependence, constantly evolving or fairly fixed, is a process heavy on the minds of adolescents. The popular notion is that identity is something declared on one's own requiring

separation from parents and other caring adults. This is a comfortable theory for many because it relieves them from taking responsibility and allows them to turn the problem over to experts of 'youth culture.' Ianni's studies, however, do not support this theory. Adolescents are far more influenced by the institutions of adults and the values of their parents than by those of their peers (Ianni p 677). What social institutions present for adolescent involvement, will be part of their identity and "internalized and integrated into their development" (Ianni p 677). Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, also of Teachers College, concludes from her exhaustive studies of adolescents that the influence of the home and the immediate community is far greater than that of the peers. She finds that adolescents tend to come back to the values of their families, which is reflected in behavior and lasting friendships (Brooks-Gunn). Since the community's influence, for good or for bad, cannot be avoided, we can choose to offer more helpful and coordinated influences or we can leave adolescents alone to sift through widely conflicting messages. By involving our adolescents with a variety of what Deborah Meier calls "sophisticated practitioners" (Meier p 18), our students observe the actions and habits, hear the stories and see the work of 'real adults.' The greater the variety of these experiences, the greater the chances that adolescents will connect a part of their experiences with something in the future. These connections may become bits of their own identity. However, just bringing these adults into the school and having them perform their adult jobs in front of students does little else than provide an active 'show and tell' period. When these adults can present a diversity of vocations, life styles, backgrounds and other human experiences while at the same time present a common core of values based on a concern for the future of these children, then we begin to construct community support for adolescent development beyond the values espoused by teachers and parents.

But, we must remember that adolescents, as Carol Gilligan points out, are "distracted by other concerns, capable of spotting contradiction, and have a keen eye for adult hypocrisy." (Gilligan p 110) Without some justification for learning, they will be "unwilling to put their self esteem on the line when failure seems inescapable." (Gilligan p 109) Therefore, these learning experiences must be relevant to adolescents' lives. Very little is more relevant to adolescent

experience than relationships. Even while an adult's skill, vocation or story may be of great interest to adolescents, it will not have true relevance until it becomes relational. This critical element will dictate which adults want to participate in intergenerational programs and how projects are designed. The minimal requirement for this relationship between young and old is mutual respect. From this, both parties have equal responsibility in the learning process and equal capabilities in the teaching process. Since friendship skills are learned, the broader the experience in forming and maintaining relationships, the more one will be capable of having many successful relationships throughout life. An adolescent who is comfortable with a variety of adults, has far greater resources to call upon than those without meaningful relationships with adults. This adolescent is also forming an important base of adaptability toward different life experiences. These experiences may be coming from direct interaction with these non-school adults, hearing about various life experiences of these adults or from observing them as models of adaptive and integrative skills. Bernice Neugarten identifies these traits as those most crucial not only to general child welfare but to "successful" aging. From many unhappy examples, he found that these are traits firmly established long before middle age and grounded in the "formative years of personality development." (Neugarten p157) John Dewey believed that "strong self concepts are the result of actual positive experiences in social interaction with a variety of people." (Conrad p 498) Expanding one's perceptions is a hallmark in development through Erikson's stages. For an adolescent to empathize with an adult's viewpoint can translate into great cognitive as well as social growth .

It is difficult to imagine an adolescent developing relationships or feeling a strong sense of self without feeling accomplished at something. It is also difficult to imagine the same adolescent feeling accomplished at something without the benefit of friends or some identity attached to that competency. While most of us discovered competencies which were intrinsically recognized and rewarded, most of our accomplishments came to us through the acknowledgment of someone we respected. During adolescence, as the immediate influence of parents can be challenged, the talents rewarded by peers tend to be those which are superficial and transient, and leading to popularity.

Competencies identified and acknowledged by adults, however, can be talents which will transcend adolescence and foster strength to withstand demands for less beneficial competencies. Mary Pipher, author of Reviving Ophelia, observes that girls (and boys) who define themselves by a talent or ability and not by appearance, popularity or sexuality have far greater strength to withstand the cultural pressures of adolescence than those without these defined competencies. (Pipher ) So, again, at the exact moment that adolescents need more feedback and recognition from adults, there are fewer around. Intergenerational learning programs can place adolescents in a variety of opportunities to demonstrate relevant skills or habits and be recognized as competent by adults outside the family and school. If the activity is one which is perceived to be relevant and is grounded in a mutually respectful relationship, a person will take pride in that accomplishment.

Perhaps the greatest potential strength of intergenerational programs is the ability to model the balance between autonomy and interdependence. Many of the messages adolescents receive, either spoken or not spoken, is that identity equals autonomy. Once one figures out who one is, they are on their own to forge their life's path. The individual is prized above all else. Schools do much to perpetuate this by the competitive structure of classes, learning, assessment, athletics and college admissions. The real world is not like this. In identifying ways in which in school learning differs from out of school learning, Lauren Resnick says that schools ultimately judge students on what they can do by themselves, while outside of school, work is shared within social systems and people are judged on how well individuals mental and physical performances mesh. (Resnick 1987) Without adults from the 'real world' to illustrate this, we may continue preparing students for a world which is nothing like the one they will face upon graduation. Carol Gilligan has much to say on this topic as well. She feels that our emphasis on adolescence as a time of individuation and the celebration of identity underrepresents the reality of human interdependence and the reliance of people on one another (Gilligan 107). By involving generations, experiences can be shared, by design or by consequence, that give a more accurate picture of the complete human condition.



## ADULT DEVELOPMENT

Human development does not stop at adulthood. Adults frequently face many of the same challenges which adolescents face, only in different contexts and forms. Experience from the adults and fresh perspective from the adolescents directed toward the same life challenges can offer far better guidance to both than facing these issues alone or only in the company of contemporaries. Popularized issues of adulthood run the range from Erikson's stage conflicts to Sheehy's modern adult dilemmas. The most common and most pertinent adult developmental challenges to intergenerational learning are realizing competence in "provisional adulthood", "middlelescence," generativity vs. stagnation, ego differentiation, emotional flexibility, mental flexibility, ego transcendence, and attaining 'wisdom' and integrity.

Provisional adulthood is a term coined by Gail Sheehy, who, in her recent book New Passages, discusses a more modern approach to many of the challenges laid out by Erikson's stage theory of development. She argues that the traditional boundaries of adulthood beginning at 18 or 21 and ending at 65 with retirement are outdated. (Sheehy) After leaving high school or college, a provisional adulthood is encountered where one's competencies are tested. Erikson sees the relational competency as most crucial at this stage (intimacy vs. isolation). Intergenerational programs could take advantage of this challenge by casting young adults in expertise roles. While they are not far along in the world of adults, they are further along than our students and they are the most closely connected with our students' experiences. Recent graduates returning to tell juniors and seniors about college life merely scratches the surface. Spotlighting their emerging skills and the relationship those skills have to school experiences not only makes learning more pertinent for our students, but it elevates the status of the recent graduate.

Sheehy sees adults progressing into First Adulthood after competencies are realized. These adults still offer a relatively fresh perspective on the adult world, are not too distant from adolescent experiences and are developing keener professional skills and habits of mind. Sheehy would also give great credence to the era in which they were born and the impact that played on

their perspective toward life. While this is nearly impossible to apply across the board, it is helpful in individual cases to call on especially relevant life experiences.

Erikson sees adults progressing into Middle Adulthood where the challenge is between generativity or stagnation. Sheehy, adjusting the scale for longer life spans and the complexities of adulthood in modern times, sees a "Middlelescence" experience between First Adulthood and Second Adulthood. Just as adolescence marks the infancy of our first adulthood, middlelescence challenges people to consider the second adulthood of their lives. Even if this sounds too much like a justification for "mid life crises," the fact remains that most adults can look ahead at age 45 and confidently ponder another twenty, thirty, forty or even fifty years of life. The same adolescent issues of identity, relationships, competencies, autonomy and interdependence are likely to emerge again if one considers the type of life ahead. The interchange of perspectives from young and old here are fascinating. This 'age of mastery' sees the adults are often close to their peak of influence in professional and personal circles with great professional and vocational expertise and perspective to offer. At the same time, however, they may be taking a fresh perspective on personal issues regarding their future life. Adolescents are even more embroiled in those personal issues and could be placed in roles of expertise. The reciprocal nature of these interchanges could be played out a variety of community planning problems. Both adults and adolescents would need to consider what is important to them now and in the foreseeable future.

As adults pass through middle adulthood or second adulthood, both Sheehy and Erikson have identified a common challenge of generativity; that is what can I give back to society, contributing to something larger than myself. These adults that choose to give of themselves and their experiences have a wealth of professional and personal knowledge to share. Even if their professional knowledge is beginning to become outdated, the habits of mind and the personal lessons learned have amazing potential for many school-related programs. Both adolescents and adults will benefit more from relevant, current issues than merely allowing the older adults to "spin yarns" about the old days. This stage of adulthood is one focused on giving to the future, not reveling in the past.

Be it Later Adulthood or the Age of Integrity, adults at the traditional age of retirement are often forced to look quite profoundly at what they have accomplished in their lives and what might lay ahead. Especially potent in men is the challenge of ego differentiation. As the work world disappears or plays less significantly in their lives, do they identify themselves with any other activities or competencies? While Neugarten suggests that it is probably too late to make dramatic personality adjustments at this stage in life (Neugarten p158), the relevance for having developed such a perspective of adaptability and flexibility in adolescence is immediate and demonstrable. Intergenerational projects can be one of these adults' varied interests which demonstrate or help further develop this ego differentiation. Ego transcendence, contributing to the future and remaining actively involved in events of the day, is a similar challenge identified by Neugarten. For those adults still searching for proclivities outside their former occupations, intergenerational learning programs can work as a transitional tool. These adults can demonstrate expertise in their past work skills and habits while at the same time be exposed to new perspectives and realities of adolescents.

Flexibility of the mind and emotions, much like with the ego, are perspectives much better instilled during one's youth than during later adulthood. Neugarten argues that it is at this point that adults find out just how ingrained those perspectives are. As family connections may weaken due to relocated children, ailing or deceased spouses and fewer living contemporary relatives, older adults need to have developed a variety of relationships and the ability to emotionally invest one's self in those relationships. While the strength and significance of relationships started from school-based intergenerational programs is unpredictable, the minimal relational elements built into these projects can provide older adults with an avenue and an object for this emotional challenge. Likewise, the intellectual stimulation from these interchanges adds to one's mental flexibility. Looking for new ideas and perspectives, even though the adult may "have known it all" in their recent past, is a sign of healthy human development at any age. To locate these adults and put them into action will not only serve as a great benefit to them, but will model a vitality and openness to ideas too often lacking in adolescent experiences.

The development of wisdom and integrity in old age are often sentimentalized in our society to the point where the words have little meaning. Not all elderly people have integrated their experiences, both good and bad, and come to an acceptance of their life as meaningful. Nor have all elderly people sifted through their many experiences in light of the issues facing themselves and others today. Intergenerational programs should not limit themselves only to those we perceived to have accomplished these traits, but to involve the elderly who have no acceptance of their lives and experiences as valuable and no willingness to relate their experiences to those younger themselves could be incredibly counterproductive to all parties. Intergenerational programs, then, should look for and fully utilize wisdom and integrity but also have an eye toward the function of fostering the pursuit of integrity and wisdom.

#### CHARACTERISTICS: WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

##### LOOK LIKE?

**Curriculum-Based**

**Relationship-Based**

**Reciprocal Relations**

**Community Based**

**Authentic Work**

I chose approximately twenty programs from around the country from which I gathered their most effective elements. These five characteristics now serve as my criteria for effective intergenerational programs. What follows is a description of these criteria and intergenerational programs which exhibit these characteristics. Note that very few if any of the programs possess all of these characteristics. Combining as many of these characteristics as possible will result in the most successful programs.

#### **Curriculum-Based**

By basing intergenerational learning within the school's curriculum three things happen.

1) The activity is given value. While community service projects with frequently similar populations are given value by schools which devote credits or significant blocks of time to them,

no greater value can be placed on a school activity than that which a teacher includes in his or her classroom. For better or for worse, the institutional value of student assessment is stamped on this project, thus legitimizing it in the same way as a unit in history, French or math. 2) The activity will be constructed by the teacher from an optimal-learning perspective. Classroom time is too vital to merely have a time consuming "experience" without carefully planning for learning to take place and incorporating the experience into existing curriculum. The chances of this activity being effective as a learning vehicle are far greater in an independent classroom than presented as an all school experience. The curricular based project has as many individual teachers taking responsibility for the success of the program as there are volunteers to include it in their classrooms. Contrast this to the school wide community service approach where one or two teachers may typically coordinate the entire program while the other teachers merely fall in line.

From my sample group, I have chosen seven examples of curricular based programs.

**The Senior Citizens' Tea:** A middle school history course, in New Brunswick, Canada, using only primary source documents felt a need to add to their resources by creating their own primary source documents. By conducting interviews with senior citizens in the area and documenting them, these fifth and sixth grade students dealt with many of the challenges wrapped up in securing authentic stories and data.

**Adopt-a-Grandfriend:** The Corey Elementary School in Arlington, Texas invites volunteer senior citizens to join their teachers for an entire school year as an assistant. The volunteer becomes actively involved in the daily learning of the children and contributes as he or she feels able. Talents of the volunteer are drawn upon as they relate to specific lessons, relationships to specific students or expertise pertinent to school-wide events.

**Computer Ease:** Treemont Elementary School in Upper Arlington, Ohio created a project in coordination with a local senior center. Senior citizens without computer knowledge were matched with students who were enrolled in the school's computer class. The students taught the seniors some basic, but very useful, computer skills. The senior citizens could then

utilize their word processing skills at they needed. Many of the senior citizens stayed connected with the school by becoming computer lab assistants.

**The Key School:** This elementary school in Indianapolis is based on many of the findings of Howard Gardner on how children most effectively learn. One of the practices of this school is to bring adult 'experts' into the classroom to demonstrate various skills, knowledge or perspectives relating to the current curriculum. These regularly appearing adults are both teachers and adults from outside the school. Key also employs a six week program in conjunction with the Indianapolis Children's Museum where students can study as an apprentice with a variety of 'masters' present in the museum.

**Interlink:** This Canadian Mental Health Association program matches student and community choral music groups together. Preparation and rehearsals take place separately at first with much written correspondence taking place. At the point at which joint rehearsals seem appropriate and productive, the groups come together. A public concert and a series of smaller performances are conducted by this combined group.

**Neighborhood 2000:** This Long Island City project utilized high school course work to map, survey, record and explore the local culture in order to work with community groups to re-design a new neighborhood park. Class time was regularly used to meet with a similarly interested elderly group, community leaders and town government officials.

**Early Adolescent Helper Program:** Social studies students at Columbus Academy, in New York City, regularly visit a senior center in order to gather oral histories which are created and used in the course work of the class.

### **Relationship-Based**

As any seasoned teacher will tell you, all learning is relational, especially where adolescents are involved. Innate talents and proclivities will take a student only so far down the road toward mastery and self-directed learning. The relationship with the teacher, mentor or fellow student may have far greater impact on one's motivation to learn. Therefore, intergenerational learning programs need to cultivate this necessity and take advantage of its growth. Caring relationships

which can motivate learning by merely placing 'nice' adults and adolescents in the same room are unlikely to blossom without a structure and means to foster this goal. Programs also need to allow time for personal connections to develop between the students and the adults.

There are six examples of programs which build in elements to help these relationships develop.

**Intergenerational Partners Project:** Students at Bright Elementary School in Chattanooga, Tennessee find their way to adult partners by way of interest surveys. The senior citizen volunteers looked over these surveys and chose the student with whom they felt they would get along best. Once these partnerships are established, eight ninety minute sessions are conducted.

**Partners in Community Leadership:** This program, developed at Iowa State University, stresses the partnership of adults and adolescents as a means of revitalizing rural communities. From sessions devoted to learning about their partner, to completely shared decision making, a mutually respectful environment is established and nurtured throughout their ten planned sessions. Perhaps most important to this feeling were the 'ice breaker' activities enjoyed by adults and students at every meeting. Being silly, curious and interested in each other together goes a long way toward attempting challenging work as a team.

**Latchkey Helpers Program and Friendly Peersuasion Project:** Fifth through eighth graders from Park School in Phoenix, Arizona and the Girls Club of Arlington, Texas, respectively, help supervise younger students in a year-long after school program. While the age difference between participants is much less in this program, great efforts are made to understand the characteristics and needs of their younger colleagues. With this foundation, older students become respected and reliable teachers.

**Interlink:** This Canadian Mental Health Association program builds relationships between young and old before rehearsals begin by way of a pen pal program. Participants share interests and ideas about the upcoming performance. These partnerships are called upon as the larger group comes together.

**The Key School:** The museum program and similar in school programs rely upon a small student to master ratio for their success. Coupled with the six week duration of the museum program, personal relationships have a good chance of developing.

### **Reciprocal Relations**

What distinguishes community service and service learning programs from the models I am illustrating is the reciprocal nature of the activities. The intent of these programs is that each party has much to offer and much to gain from the interchange. Taking ten middle school students to the soup kitchen or nursing home provides a service for the patrons while the students may or may not take some intangible lesson from the activity. The activity is primarily a one way venture. Just as adolescents need to be valued and seen as helpful, so to do the older people in these programs. In the best programs the lines between those served and those serving are blurred to the point of irrelevance. To achieve the greatest learning possible, both adults and adolescents can offer expertise and the need to acquire knowledge. The learning process needs to be as dynamic as possible.

Six programs from my pool demonstrated a reciprocal emphasis that promoted two-way learning.

**Waves:** This community based program designed in the lower east side of Manhattan sent young people off to learn about the culture of their neighborhoods. The students pursued those crafts, historical periods or activities which interested them most. They sought out experts in those areas and learned all that they could. The students emerging expertise, along with their own perspective, was then put on display in publications and exhibits. Both the adults and students in the community taught as well as learned from this work.

**Partners in Community Leadership:** The motivation for keeping youth involved in these rural communities was so great that every aspect of the program is shared between the adults and the adolescents. The mutual respect which builds strong relationships insures a truly reciprocal project.



**Computer Ease:** The student teachers in this program learned much more about their skills and knowledge as they taught. The adults learned a new and useful skill and many stayed on to teach those new skills to other students.

**The Key School:** The apprenticeship type program established here is a good illustration of the generative needs of the adults being addressed at the same time as the students are learning. The students chose an activity in which to immerse themselves and the adults contributed not only to the students' learning but to the perpetuation of their own craft.

**Neighborhood 2000:** Just as in the Iowa State program, the process for re-designing the park was one shared by all participants. Each group had as much to contribute to the task as they had to learn from it. As the students felt more and more valued in the process, they became more open to learning about their community.

### **Community Based**

"Community" takes on two relevant meanings in this context. Involving students in a discipline's community of practice will expose them to masters who can bring relevance to many topics of study. Projects which are centered around legitimate problems in the local community cannot help but become intergenerational ones at the same time that relevance is brought to potentially abstract study. If a student is paired with an adult in a mutually respectful team only to conquer 'classroom' projects with little real world relevance, very little advantage is taken of the expertise and new teaching and learning that could be occurring. After all, the adults with the most to offer about the real world are not in the schools, but out in the community.

The list of appropriate examples includes six programs which focused themselves on real community issues.

**Partners in Community Learning:** Several sessions within this program are spent finding out about their own community, each others' perceptions about that community and how they can go about helping it. Through this process, the teams can decide upon an appropriate project and its design.

**The Key School:** Adults regularly come into the classrooms to demonstrate real world application of various talents and skills. Often times, the adults are teachers who demonstrate real world skills beyond their teaching skills. The apprenticeship project also matches students with local artisans and experts representing a community of practice as well as the Indianapolis community.

**Neighborhood 2000:** This program might well epitomize a community based experience. The problem was one immediate to the students and the senior citizens with whom they worked. In order to address the problem, the participants had to explore the community processes involved. Also in order to address the problem the community decision making process had to consult and include these participating groups.

**Waves:** This lower east side of Manhattan project is completely emersed in the local community and its practicing experts. Unlike school programs which must often stretch themselves to guarantee relevance, this after school program relies on its relevance to attract interested adolescents. The adults within the community are just as motivated to participate since the outcome of the project will benefit them just as much as the students.

**Latchkey Helper Program:** The middle school students are intimately tied to both a community problem and a community solution. Their concern and expertise was brought to bear on an issue very close to their own hearts.

**Youth Leadership Program:** Similarly, sixth, seventh and eighth graders from Pyne Point Middle School in Camden, New Jersey lend their expertise and interest to tutor elementary school students four times each week. They identified the problem and worked within their immediate community to come up with a solution.

### **Authentic Work:**

This may be perhaps the most difficult element to design into an intergenerational program. Of all the programs I examined, it was striking how many fell short on this measure. Many intergenerational programs are content to bring the young and the old together, hoping that a 'nice' relationship sprouts up and that both parties go away with a warm feeling in their hearts as the

biggest thing to show for their efforts. Warm feelings should not be discounted, but it is useful to remember our target audience and their resistance to jump at projects which do not seem to offer them anything of consequence. Although it would be difficult to design it this way, one could develop a program which incorporates all of the preceding five characteristics but somehow fails to make the final 'product' pertinent and worthy of great mental and physical energy. If so, we have missed a great opportunity to show to both parties in our interchange the validity and power of their potential together. While this is the final criteria mentioned, it is often worthwhile to consider this element first.

The examples raised here vary in their potency of authenticity, but all show an end 'product' that both parties could look to as making their efforts worth their time and energy.

**Partners in Community Leadership:** When the partnerships have completed their work in this program, the community has something new to show off. New parks, recycling programs and community centers are a few of the tangible results.

**The Key School:** These elementary students, matched with artisans in the museum setting, are doing the work of these masters. They can see the immediate relevance of the tasks at hand because this is how this adult makes a living. The same can be said for many of the experts who visit the classroom.

**Interlink:** Nothing is more telling of a group's success than a public performance. The adults and students experienced many other successes as they prepared for the performance, but its success served as immediate feedback on this intergenerational activity.

**Neighborhood 2000:** A new park now stands where a dysfunctional piece of property stood for years.

**Waves:** Publications, exhibits, and precious knowledge are all valued by the larger community. The adolescents in this program have tangible pieces to document their accomplishments as well as a new perspective on their community.

**Latchkey Helpers, Friendly Persuasion and Youth Leadership:** The middle school students involved in these programs do not have parks, buildings or documents to point to

as evidence of their accomplishments. They, however, have the daily feedback of the young children they are helping each day.

#### PROCESS: WHAT GOES ON AT EVERY MEETING?

The most successful programs not only address these larger goals from above but they pay close attention to a few procedural points as well. None of these topics differ from the process employed in any well planned unit of study but since intergenerational learning represents fairly new ground in most school settings, it is vital that each attempt be as successful as possible.

Before embarking on any intergenerational project, it is helpful to prepare students both for the upcoming topics of study and the people with whom they are about to study. Many successful programs study common issues of the elderly that may arise in the course of their work together. A balance needs to be achieved here between dealing only with what is immediately applicable for the work to come and launching into a full blown study of the elderly. The same is true for adults who are becoming more familiar with general adolescent characteristics.

There should be legitimate and realistic goals set for each meeting. As these goals continue to be accomplished, participants will see that it was worth persevering through the initial awkwardness which may come from these 'unusual' groupings. It only takes one or two unsuccessful meetings for both parties to return to stereotypes of the other which may further isolate one from the other.

Immediate and regular reflection on topics or incidents of confusion is vital to success in any new setting or learning activity. Just as with apprenticeships, the immediate attention to misconceptions does not allow them to become operational mental models that people will act upon. Since much of this work may be different than already established ideas about the other generation, it is just as important to expose and compare the new experiences with the old models. These sessions are conducted as journal writings, regular question and answer periods or open discussions apart from the other party. Programs which are successful in creating a secure environment between the generations conduct these sessions with all participants present.

As with any significant venture, it is important to have a culminating activity which allows time for recognition of the task completed and the lessons learned. The ritual nature of this event can help all those involved to see what has been experienced and how that might influence future activities. Many programs invited parents, friends and members of the community to observe what they had done together. This is also a great time to recognize the special efforts of volunteers and the value of these activities beyond the realm of the normal classroom.

#### PLANNING: WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE PROGRAM CAN START?

Behind these glamorous goals and achievements are the activities done long before programs are up and running. I have gathered eight 'to-do' steps to follow which can tremendously benefit an entire school's intergenerational program.

- Build on the existing services of the community so as to optimize financial resources of the school and the community. It is important to find out what is free already and where large volunteer bases are located. Schools' community service coordinators are great resources for these contacts as are the ideas represented in the programs discussed here.
- A point person on campus needs to become the expert on intergenerational learning and strategizing. In order for individual teachers to jump into this method of learning, they will need much support and encouragement. This is difficult work to begin and maintain. The tremendous benefits of these activities needs to be shown off so that more teachers will climb aboard. It is unrealistic to think that one classroom teacher can carry this burden alone.
- If a school will be seeking volunteers from particular community centers it is crucial to enlist the support of their administrative staff before initiating a program. This contact may determine the direction and type of programs that are appropriate for that center as well as providing valuable information about their potential volunteers. This level of support is just as vital as having a support person on campus.
- Preliminary visits to the community institutions representing the participants is helpful. Students visiting City Hall, a senior center or a work site gives them an idea of what to expect

before the activity begins. Several programs provide the same opportunity for the adult volunteers. These visits can also indicate how a program may need to be adjusted before it is up and running.

- These programs are dependent upon volunteers from the community. They should also entered into only by volunteer teachers on campus. As with any new idea, compulsory participation is the quickest route to defeat. Start small and grow by way of positive evidence around school.

- It is tempting and very easy to make these activities "one time shots." It is much more difficult to perpetuate the adults' involvement in the learning of the students. Many schools include their volunteers in a variety of all-school activities such as grandparents day, concerts, productions, athletic events and assemblies. This keeps your pool of volunteers active and can also broaden the constituency of your school, thus attracting more potential volunteers. The new alliances between students and these adults and between these adults and the school will also breed many greater ideas for future intergenerational projects.

- What do we want from our volunteers? In the potentially frustrating search for volunteers, schools may forget to ask this question. The goals of your programs, how these are connected to the mission of the school and what responsibility the volunteers play in this dynamic need to be analyzed before volunteers are solicited. Many schools write 'job descriptions' to ensure that all participants share the same perspective. People are willing to volunteer for a variety of reasons, many of which may not suit the goals of a school's program objectives.

- Lastly, the assessment tool to monitor a program's success should be designed before it begins. This tool can be designed into the reflection periods and culminating activities. The process as well as the product of the programs should be evaluated. Therefore, important questions about characteristics of the program itself should be asked in addition to questions about the effectiveness of intergenerational activities as a vehicle for improved learning and healthier development.

### CONCLUSION: WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED?

At the beginning of this paper, three questions were posed about the viability of intergenerational programs in our schools. 1) How can schools involve older adults in a way that leads to a permanent mechanism for intergenerational ventures? 2) How can schools maximize the involvement of older adults so that programs are meaningful and make an impact? 3) How can educators reach an understanding that intergenerational programs are the next logical step in education reform? (Angelis and Wathen). Perhaps if the last of these three questions were answered first, the other two would fall in line. Realizing how intergenerational learning programs can address so many of the educational goals found in various reform efforts gives teachers the motivation to pursue questions of structure and design of these projects. Sociological ills and stereotyped assumptions of generational differences have not persuaded many that we must actively involve great numbers of older adults in our schools. Evidence of learning, however, cannot be turned away from so easily by "masters of learning." The learning inherent in effective intergenerational learning programs can be at once academic and communal, intellectual and personal. As an end in itself, intergenerational learning, will not teach as much as many current educational efforts. As a vehicle for the broader goal of learning for understanding, however, intergenerational learning programs can teach all those involved that learning and development are truly life-long pursuits.

## APPENDIX #1

## WHAT INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING CAN DO FOR ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### IDENTITY, ADULT ROLE, EXPLORATION:

- what social institutions present for adolescent involvement will be part of their identity, integrated into development
- guided exposure to adulthood
- observe actions and habits of real adults
- observe models of adults worthy of emulation
- the more diversity of models the more possibilities, connections, potential available for adolescent
- diversity of models grounded in common values of care for adolescent development = community support for development
- support and interdependence is constantly observable

### RELATIONSHIPS, RESILIENCY:

- brings relevance to any study
- mutual respect strengthens relationship (uncommon between adult and adolescent)
- equal teaching and learning responsibilities become possible
- develops "friendship skills"
- adaptive and integrative skills learned and developed through observation and experience
- strengthens self concept as more varied and numerous social interactions
- empathizing spurs intellectual growth and visa versa
- socially shared experiences with adults and other "novices"



**COMPETENCY:**

- talents identified and acknowledgments by adults
- competencies established beyond transient and superficial demands of adolescent peer pressure
- guided journey from novice to master by way of bench marks and rites of passage
- feedback and recognition offered in life stage just when it is needed (the 'need' to feel good at something)
- opportunity to demonstrate relevant skills and be recognized by adults in the real world

**AUTONOMY AND INTERDEPENDENCE:**

- presents more realistic image of the way people work together
- shared social systems used to accomplish goals
- success dependent on the meshing of mental and physical efforts of individuals
- interdependence and reliance on others demonstrated and experienced
- presents many observable models of "autonomous and interdependent adults"

## APPENDIX #2

**TEACHER AS COACH**

- 'team' is novices at varying levels
- novices learn from one another as well as from coach
- coach is a master at the game he/she is coaching
- coach models expertise as participant, observer and/or strategist
- exposes students to models of high caliber
- practice skills in context of real game
- theory introduced only as is beneficial to performance
- product is socially valued
- feedback and assessment is constant and is based on anticipated product
- feedback takes many forms from conversation to video tape
- personal investment in sport is obvious and on display

## APPENDIX #3

**TEACHER AS MASTER**

- Master of 'game' which resembles real life
- connects class work with real world work
- takes part in the world and reflects upon that experience
- models active involvement in intellectual interests
- takes part in projects and reflects upon progress in public ways
- offers strategic feedback to students
- structures learning in ways that allow students to learn from each other
- exercises authority in meaningful ways

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aday, Ronald H., McDuffie, Wini, Sims, Cyndee Rice, "Impact of an Intergenerational Program on Black Adolescents' Attitudes Toward the Elderly", *Educational Gerontology*, Volume 19, Number 7, O/N 1993, pages 663-673.
- Aday, Ronald H., Rice, Cyndee and Evans, Emilie, "Intergenerational Partners Project: A model Linking Elementary Students with Senior Center Volunteers," *The Gerontologist*, Volume 31, Number 2, 1991.
- Anker, Roy M. and Schultze, Quentin J., Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular Culture and the Electronic Media, Erdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1991.
- Angelis, Jane, "The Genesis of an Intergenerational Program", *Educational Gerontology*, v18 June 1992, pg317-27.
- Angelis, Jane and Wathen, Lisa, "Involving Older Adults in Schools: Is it Spreading Wisdom or Making More Work?" *Education Week*, Nov. 9, 1994, pages 32 and 36.
- Bengtson, Vern, Burton, Linda and Schaie, K. Warner, Adult Intergenerational Relations, Springer Publishing, New York 1995.
- Boldero, Jennifer & Fallon, Barry, "Adolescent Help-Seeking: What Do They Get Help for, and from Whom?" *Journal of Adolescence*, Volume 18, Number 2, 1995, pages 193-209.
- Boyer, Ernest L., "Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation", *Young Children*, March 1993, pages 54-57.
- Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne, presentation to Klingenstein Visiting Fellows, January 31, 1996.
- Chapman, Nancy J., Neal, Margaret, B., "The Effects of Intergenerational Experiences on Adolescents and Older Adults", *The Gerontologist*, Volume 30, Number 6, 1990, pages 825-832.
- Conrad, Dan, "Arguments for Educators: A Rationale for High School Service Learning Programs," in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, Volume 1, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1990.
- Crites, Marsha S., "Child Development and Intergenerational Programming," *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society*, Volume 20, Number 3-4, 1989, pages 33-45.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly and Larson, Reed, Being Adolescent, Basic Books, New York 1984.
- Decker, Larry E. and Decker, Virginia A., "Home/School/Community Involvement," program description, 1988.
- Drenning, Susan and Getz, Lou, "Computer Ease," *Phi Delta Kappan*, Volume 73, Number 6, February 1992, pages 471-472.
- Frego, David R.J., "Uniting the Generations with Music Programs," *Music Educators Journal*, Volume 81, May 1995, pages 17-19.
- Gardner, Howard, The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach, Basic Books, New York, 1991.
- Giles, Swight E. Jr., "Dewey's Theory of Experience: Implications for Service-Learning" in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, Volume 1, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1990.
- Gilligan, Carol, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," in Approaches to Moral Development: New REsearch and Emerging Themes, Andrew Garrard, Editor, Teachers College Press, New York, 1993

- Glass, J. Conrad Jr., Trent, Curtis, "Changing Ninth-Graders' Attitudes Toward Older Persons", *Research on Aging*, Volume 2, Number 4, 1980, pages 499-512.
- Gribbin, Randall and Kenner, Lynn, "Reaching Out to Senior Citizens," *Principal*, Volume 71, Number 3, January 1992, pages 16-19.
- Harrington, Diane and Schine, Joan, Connections: Service Learning in the Middle Grades, Early Adolescent Helper Program, 1989.
- Harrison, Charles H., Student Service: The New Carnegie Unit, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton, New Jersey, 1987.
- Hamilton, Stephen F., Apprenticeships for Adulthood: Preparing Youth for the Future, The Free Press, New York, 1990.
- Hamon, Raeann, R., Koch, Deborah, K., "The Elder Mentor Relationship: An Experiential Learning Tool", *Educational Gerontology*, Volume 19, 1993, pages 147-159.
- Heckenmueller, Jerome P. and Keller Ann, "Age Integrated Learning: A Theoretical Model," conference paper, November 1984.
- Hedin, Diane and Conrad, Dan, "The Impact of Experiential Education on Youth Development," in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, Volume 1, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1990.
- Ianni, Francis, J., "Providing a Structure for Adolescent Development", *Phi Delta Kappan*, May, 1989, pages 673-682.
- Kaplan, Matt, "Engaging Youth and Senior Adults in Community Life," *The Education Digest*, November 1993, pages 63-66.
- Kimmel, Douglas C. and Weiner, Irving B., Adolescence: A Developmental Transition, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1985.
- Langone, John, Growing Older: What Young People Should Know About Aging, Little and Brown, Boston 1991.
- Lave, Jean and Wenger, Estienne, Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Meier, Deborah, "Why Kids Don't 'Want' to be Well Educated: Rethinking School Reform," conference paper, April 1993
- North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Partners in Community Leadership: Youth and Adults Working Together for Better Communities, Iowa State University Printing Services, October 1993.
- Neugarten, Bernice, Personality in Middle and Late Life: Empirical Studies, Atherton Press, New York, 1964.
- Olejnik, Anthony B., LaRue, Asenath A., "Changes in Perceptions of the Aged", *Educational Gerontology*, Volume 6, Number 4, June 1981, pages 339-351.
- O'Reilly, Evelyn Marie, Issues in Talk About Aging in the United States, Educational Doctorate Dissertation, 1991.
- Pipher, Mary , Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, Ballantine Books, New York, 1995.
- Putnam, Robert D., "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 6, Number 1, January 1995, pages 65-78.

Rasinski, Timothy V., "A Model of Collaboration in a Curricular Program," American Educational Research Association paper presentation, April 1984.

Resnick, Lauren B., "Learning In School and Out," *Educational Researcher*, December 1987, pages 13-20.

ReVille, Shari, "Young Adulthood to Old Age: Looking at Intergenerational Possibilities from a Human Development Perspective," *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society*, Volume 20, Number 3-4, pages 5-53.

Russell, Charles H., Good News About Aging, Wiley, New York, 1989.

Ryan, Richard M., "Representations of Relationships to Teachers, Parents and Friends as Predictors of Academic Motivation and Self Esteem," *Journal of Early Adolescent*, Volume 14, Number 2, May 1994, pages 226-249.

Sears, Alan and Bidlake, George, "The Senior Citizens' Tea: A Connecting Point for Oral History in the Elementary School," *The Social Studies*, July/August 1991, pages 133-135.

Sheehy, Gail, New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time, Random House, 1995.

Sparling, Joyce W., "Intergenerational Intervention: A Reciprocal Service Delivery System for Preschoolers, Adolescents, and Older Persons", *Educational Gerontology*, Volume 11, 1985, pages 41-55.

Seefeldt, Carol, Jantz, Richard K., Galper, Alice, Serock, Kathy, "Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly: Educational Implications", *Educational Gerontology*, Volume 2, 1977, pages 301-310.

Seefeldt, Carol, "Intergenerational Programs-Impact on Attitudes", *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society*, , v20 1989, pg185-94.

Wigfield, Allan, "Children's Competence Beliefs, Achievement Values, and General Self-Esteem: Change Across Elementary and Middle School," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Volume 14, Number 2, 1994, pages 107-138.

Winston, Susan, Middle School Initiatives, Community School District One, conversation, February, 28, 1996.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
*Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)*  
*Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*



## NOTICE

### REPRODUCTION BASIS

This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").