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Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date February 21, 1990

DE-6 (2/88)
ABSTRACT:

Learning Activities in Later Life

Learning is a lifelong affair. Learning is critical across the entire life course for adults facing the potentials and problems of an extended life; learning is crucial for a society adjusting to the economic and social pressures of a rapidly aging population. How can adult educators respond to these challenges and become effective catalysts for learning activities in later life? One important, preliminary step involves understanding participation in learning activities from the older adult point of view.

To date, however, adult educators only have a partial view of participation in learning activities in later life, a view clouded by narrow definitions of education and learning, and limited by concepts of traditional educational programs. The purpose of this current study was to explore participation of adults over the age of 55 in a broad range of learning activities and to examine the relationship between their participation and selected personal and sociodemographic measures influencing participation. A questionnaire consisting of a checklist of 71 learning activities and sociodemographic questions was distributed to 1228 adults over the age of 55. Responses from 332 respondents were analyzed using SPSS/PC+ (Ver. 3.0).

On average, older adults reported taking part in 35 learning activities over the past year. Respondents reported participating in these learning activities for an average of 14 hours per week.
Respondents who reported greater participation were more likely to be female, younger, more educated, and in better health. Those reporting greater participation also reported more reasons for participation, more sponsoring agencies for their learning activities, and were more likely to belong to community and professional organizations. Older adults reported certain changes in their learning activity choices since age forty. Active people remained active in later life although they restructured their learning activity choices. They restructured their learning activity patterns by increases in attending senior centres; watching Public Broadcasting System (PBS), Knowledge Network and other educational television; reflecting on life events; and, learning about health and nutrition.

The most important learning activities reported by respondents reflected the significance of nonformal and informal activities: reading books or plays; watching Public Broadcasting System (PBS), Knowledge Network and educational television; reading newspapers and magazines; travelling; talking with family and friends; and, attending senior centres. The principal sponsoring agencies for learning activities in later life were senior centres, media, and oneself. The primary reasons for participation were growth and socially-oriented: keeping one’s mind alive, gaining knowledge or skill, and meeting or being with friends. The leading barrier to participation, being too busy, suggested an active lifestyle for many later life learners. Other
barriers were transportation, money, location of the activity, and health status.


Current definitions of learning activities for older adults are too narrow. The findings from this study demonstrated the diversity and breadth of learning activities engaged in by older people. Participation in these learning activities is not necessarily bounded by rigid age barriers, educational background or income. This study challenges the relevance of narrow views of participation based upon traditional, institutionally-based programs and identifies a complex web of predominantly nonformal, informal, and self-directed learning activities in later life. Collaborative efforts among older adults, community leaders and adult educators will promote interdependent, positive lifestyles in later life and encourage the development of more accessible educational resources for older learners.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Whatever else should our lives be but a continual series of beginnings, of painful settings out into the unknown, pushing off from the edge of consciousness into the mystery of what we have not yet become, except in dreams.

David Maloff
An Imaginary Dream

Learning does not stop because an individual reaches the prescribed retirement age of sixty-five; learning does not stop because an individual loses visual or auditory sensitivity. Learning is important throughout the life course.

There is a substantial role for adult educators in legitimating, developing and enhancing relevant learning activities for growing numbers of aging adults facing the possibilities and problems of later life. Developing this role can have significant implications for improving the quality of life for the aging individual, for influencing the social construction of aging, and for debunking aging myths that set false limits on growth in later life. Before undertaking these challenges, however, an understanding of participation in later life must expand to include broader definitions of education and a deeper understanding of the personal, socioeconomic, and political forces shaping participation. This study, Learning Activities in Later Life, explores participation in a broad range of learning activities and explores these activities from the older adult point of view.
Problem Statement

In an era of decreasing financial resources and increasing demographic aging, it is critical that policy makers, educators and community workers make effective decisions and develop relevant learning activities for older adults. These learning activities encompass a broad spectrum of programs including formal, nonformal, informal and self-directed activities. To date, however, participation studies in adult education have not provided a complete picture of participation in learning activities in later life. Instead, numerous studies have presented narrow snapshots in time, bounded by traditional concepts of courses, classrooms, and institutional sponsorship. Consequently, the richness and variety of participation in learning activities in later life has been neglected. Effective programming for older adults is compromised by incomplete knowledge about participation in later life.

As population aging escalates, it will be increasingly important to plan, implement, and evaluate relevant programs for older adults. Program planning decisions must be based on a realistic and broad vision of participation in later life.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and explore participation in a wider range of learning activities in later life than
currently presented in the literature and to examine the relationship between this participation and selected personal and sociodemographic measures suspected of influencing participation. This exploration provides policy makers, educators, and community workers, with additional information for planning and implementing learning activities that acknowledge the potentials, diversity, and problems of later life.

Background to the Study

Two major issues have influenced the development of this study:
1. The importance of learning activities across the life span.
2. The contradiction between participation research and self-reports of participation in learning activities by older adults.

Importance of Learning Activities Across the Life Course

It is essential for adults to continue to learn in a rapidly changing, aging society. Consequently, legitimating, supporting, and enhancing participation in learning activities are important adult education endeavors. Rapid technological and social change requires adults, young and old, to meet evolving challenges and possibilities (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Long, 1987). Thornton (1986) observed that continuing participation in learning activities was a necessity for optimal functioning and that learners must continually use or loose their learning abilities.
A number of studies have reflected on the relationship between participation in learning activities and individual needs in later life. For the individual, participation in learning activities is an essential strategy for meeting the multiple demands of aging and for challenging the potentials and possibilities of later life. McClusky (1971) presented five categories of older adults' needs that could be met through participation in learning activities. These included (a) coping needs - needs that arise due to changes in the individual or changed relations with society; (b) expressive needs - needs for an activity for its own sake; (c) contributive needs - needs arising out of the desire to give something of value to others; (d) influence needs - needs to contribute to the betterment of society; and (e) transcendence needs - needs to move beyond the constraints of the physical body towards a deeper understanding the meaning of life. In a later study, Birren and Woodruff (1973) examined the importance of participation in learning activities for the alleviation of age related problems, for the prevention of unnecessary decline, and for supporting and enriching possibilities for continuing growth in later life. More recently, the National Advisory Council on Aging (1989) suggested that four types of learning opportunities were essential for meeting the needs of the older adult: (a) learning to survive, (b) learning to cope, (c) learning to give, and (d) learning to grow and enjoy.

From a social perspective, relevant learning opportunities can influence the social construction of aging and the creation of more
equitable futures in later life. These two issues are extremely relevant for Canada, a society continuing to age due to decreases in fertility, improvements in health-care systems, and the aging of the baby boom generation (Gutman, Gee, Bowjanowski, & Mottet, 1986; Statistics Canada, 1987; Stone & Fletcher, 1986). These issues are also crucial for groups within the older adult population with multiple and pressing educational needs. Among these groups are rapidly increasing numbers of older seniors facing a previously uncharted part of the life course and older women often facing the quadruple jeopardy of being female, old, poor, and isolated. Unfortunately, however, many of these older adults are uncomfortable in traditional educational settings and place little value on participation in institutionally-based programs.

How can educators become effective catalysts of learning experiences for older adults whose "biography as a learner" (Thornton, 1986, p.62) is inconsistent with the structure and demands of more traditional educational programs? Developing a meaningful answer to this question requires us, as educators, to broaden our understanding of existing learning networks, and to shift perspectives from an institutional to a learner point of view.

Contradictions Between Research and Self-Reports of Participation

To date, participation research in adult education has aggregated persons over the age of sixty-five into a single category, assumed an underlying homogeneity for this group, and often implied decline and
disengagement with advancing years. Additionally, numerous studies have explored participation in more traditional, institutionally sponsored courses and programs (Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974; Devereaux, 1985; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). These studies, reflecting an incomplete model of participation in learning activities, indicated that the participation of older adults in educational endeavors was very low. For example, the recent Canadian survey, One in Every Five (Devereaux, 1985), considered adult education in terms of courses and classes and aggregated all participants over the age of sixty-five. Devereaux (1985) reported that the participation of those sixty-five and over in adult education was 4%, well below the national average of 19% for all Canadians over the age of 17. These Canadian statistics are consistent with earlier findings in the United States (Cross, 1981; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Peterson, 1983; Ventura and Worthy, 1982).

In contrast to these reports, a recent informal investigation conducted at the University of British Columbia’s 1988 Summer Program for Retired Persons provided insight into the richness of learning activities in later life which contradicted findings from earlier participation data (Clough, 1988). The results of this informal survey suggested that these older adults, ranging in age from 60-89, continued to learn in multiple and diverse activities. The 69 respondents reported a broad range of learning activities sponsored by a wide variety of organizations. Additionally, these older adults often planned their own learning activities utilizing resources from the
formal, nonformal, and informal sectors. These findings not only underscored the diversity of learning activities in later life but also raised a number of questions concerning our current understanding of the older adult as learner and about the organization of learning activities in later life. What are the most important learning activities for these older adults? Have cross-sectional studies assumed a homogeneous population of older adults which does not, in reality, exist? Which are the preferred sponsors of learning activities for older adults? The answers to these questions have important consequences for older adults, program planners, and for the growing number of professionals and non-professionals working with and for older adults.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed as a framework for analyzing learning activities in later life:

1. What types of learning activities do older adults engage in?
2. What are the most important learning activities in later life?
3. What sociodemographic measures influence participation in later life?
4. How does participation in learning activities change from age forty to later life?
5. What choices do older adults make about the sponsorship and organization of their learning activities?
6. What reasons do older adults give for participation in learning activities?

7. What are the barriers to participation in learning activities in later life?

8. Do learning activities group themselves into useful factors?

Definitions

Defining terms which direct the flow of a research project is an essential task. While scientific concepts connote phenomena with firmly established boundaries, concepts in the social sciences often lack precision or rigid boundaries and, consequently, require definition for each study. The definitions used in this study are synthesized from current adult education and educational gerontology literature.

Older Adult

In this study, the term older adult referred to an individual fifty-five years of age or older.

Learning Activity

For the purpose of this study, a learning activity referred to any experience during the past year in which adults over the age of 55 reported that learning occurred. These included any formal, nonformal,
informal or self-directed activities that enhanced or expanded knowledge, skills, understanding or awareness.

**Modes of Education: Formal, Nonformal, Informal**

For the purpose of this study Coombs’ (1985) and Coombs & Ahmed’s (1974) classifications of formal, nonformal, and informal education were used as a typology for understanding learning activities in later life.

Formal education referred to a "the highly institutionalized chronologically graded and hierarchically structured 'education system', spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of university" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). This formal mode of education is used infrequently by older adults who pursue full-time degree or certificate programs offered by educational institutions.

Nonformal education referred to "any organized systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, nonformal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programs, adult literacy programs, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like" (Coombs, 1985, p.23). Some examples of nonformal education with special relevance for older learners include Universities of the Third Age,
Elderhostel, educative activities sponsored by a wide variety of volunteer and church organizations, senior centre programs, self-help groups, and wellness programs.

Informal education referred to "the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment - at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers or books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized and unsystematic and even unintentional at times" (Coombs, 1985, p.25). Some examples of informal education with special relevance for older adults include educative experiences associated with the media and library, travel, recreation and hobbies, and interaction with family and peer groups.

There are no rigid boundaries between these three modes of education and boundary disputes are inevitable. In this current study formal, nonformal and informal learning activities were not directly measured. The typology, however, presented a useful classification system for exploring the diversity of learning activities in later life.

Self-Directed Learning Activities

Self-directed learning activities referred to self-planned activities, often utilizing resources in formal, nonformal, or informal sectors. Brookfield (1984) defined self-directed learning as the
intentional pursuit of clearly specified learning goals with the learner exercising control over the content and method of learning.

Participation

For each respondent, participation was defined in three ways:

1) The number of self-reported learning activities.

2) The rate of participation for each respondent. Each respondent reported how frequently they engaged in each of 71 learning activities (Daily=1; Weekly=2; Monthly=3; Quarterly=4; Annually=5; Never=6). The participation rate was an individual’s average participation across all activities.

3) The number of reported hours per week engaged in learning activities.

Organizational Choices Made by Older Adults

This study measured four choices older adults made related to the sponsorship and organization of learning activities. These included choices about the sponsoring agency for the activity, the time of day of participation, participation alone or in group settings, and participation in activities with one’s own age cohort (age-segregated) or with persons of varied ages (age-integrated).
Sociodemographic Measures Influencing Participation

This study measured selected sociodemographic variables influencing participation. These measures included age, gender, marital status, education, work situation, occupation, income, and living arrangement in the household. Other sociodemographic measures included self-reports of life satisfaction, health status, presence of a confidant, belonging to a community or professional organization, reasons for participation, barriers to participation, and changes in participation since age 40. These measures are operationalized in Chapter III.

Summary

Older adults can continue to learn what is necessary to make optimal adjustments and to make the best decisions based upon their own diversified situations and obligations (Peterson, 1983). Participating in relevant learning activities can assist older adults in making these adjustments and in pursuing significant potentials for growth in later life. Planning and implementing these learning opportunities for later life learners is, therefore, an essential adult education enterprise.

To date, however, adult education literature has presented a narrow picture of participation in later life, a picture limited by narrow definitions of education and clouded by concepts of traditional programs. This study, Learning Activities in Later Life, explores
participation in a broader range of learning activities than currently reported in the literature. It also examines the relationship between measures of participation and selected personal and sociodemographic measures suspected of influencing participation: age, gender, marital status, living arrangement, work situation, income, education, life satisfaction, health status, presence of a confidant, belonging to a community or professional organization, reasons for participation, barriers to participation, and changes in participation since age forty. The findings from this study suggest directions for research and practice which are important for adult educators and for the increasing number of professionals and non-professionals designing and implementing learning activities for a growing population of later life learners.
This chapter reviews six issues relevant to enhancing an understanding of participation in learning activities in later life:

- An emerging life-span perspective
- Lifelong education
- Modes of education: Formal, nonformal, informal, self-directed
- Benefits from participation in learning activities
- Research about participation in learning activities in later life
- Organizational choices made by older adults

An Emerging Life-Span Perspective

Until 1930, it was assumed that development occurred only during childhood and adolescent years (Havighurst, 1973). The period of adulthood, especially the later years, was considered a period of continual decline and disengagement (Cumming & Henry, 1961). Then, early life-span developmental psychologists challenged theories of decline and disengagement (Buhler, 1935; Erikson, 1950; Havighurst, 1952) and adopted a life-span perspective. This life-span perspective considered that development was both possible and necessary and assumed an active individual interacting with the social and physical environment throughout the life course (Havighurst, 1973). Later life
was acknowledged as an integral part of the life span and was legitimated as a focus for research. This perspective, in opposition to a disengagement view of aging, opened up new horizons concerning possibilities for continuing participation in learning activities during later life.

Birren & Woodruff (1973) explored the relationship between a developmental perspective and education in later life and concluded:

In order to cope with the demands of accelerating social change in the twentieth century the orientation of educational institutions must be altered from one of exclusive concern with the first two decades of life to involvement with education over the entire life-span. (p. 306)

Havighurst (1952) suggested a link between developmental tasks at each stage of the life course and education. Using Erikson's stages of ego development as a foundation, Havighurst proposed the concept of developmental tasks which "are based upon biological development and social expectations which change through the life span and give direction, force, and substance to the development of personality" (Havighurst, 1973, p.11) at all stages of the life course. These tasks produced what Havighurst labeled as a readiness to learn which signals important teachable moments throughout the life course (Havighurst, 1952). More recently, Brown (1978) extended this concept of developmental tasks to later life by examining developmental tasks for both the younger and the older old.

Critiques have questioned the generational bound, middle-class, male bias of developmental task research. These critics must be
considered if concepts of developmental tasks are to provide educators with guidelines for planning and implementing appropriate learning activities across the life course. Contemporary research is required to establish the relevance of these later life-tasks for current cohorts of older adults.

The life-span view presented an alternative perspective for framing participation studies in adult education. Previously, participation studies implicitly assumed an age-graded disengagement view of aging and provided limited information on later life. Older adults were also not often the focus of participation studies (Percy, 1989). Adult education research often aggregated all persons over the age of 60 or 65 and implicitly assumed a homogeneity among seniors which did not, in reality, exist.

Adult educators recognized the importance of learning throughout the life course for their field of study and practice (Cross, 1981; Cross, Tough, & Weathersby, 1978). A conceptual basis for an expanded view of life-span learning emerged in subsequent research (Courtenay & Long, 1987; Peterson, 1983; Thornton, 1986). Within this perspective, learning was not bounded by traditional forms and organized structures; learning was viewed "within a context of time, place, antecedents, and events" (Thornton, 1986, p.65). This life-span perspective in adult education inferred that participation in learning activities was both possible and necessary in later life.
The following section reviews concepts of lifelong education which provided an educational framework for this study.

Lifelong Education

Concepts of lifelong learning, lifelong education, and a learning society are prevalent in contemporary adult education literature. In a learning society people continue to learn throughout the life course (Cross, 1981; Peterson, 1983; Thomas 1983); in a learning society, later life is recognized as an integral part of the life span. Thomas (1983) observed:

The technically advanced societies in particular...are increasingly dependent on learning, that is, upon learning undertaken by increasing numbers and types of individuals in their populations, over longer periods of their lifetimes - learning which cannot be accomplished by means of exposure to educational resources in the first twenty years of life. (p. 18)

Concepts of lifelong education and lifelong learning provide a philosophical basis for the development of learning activities in later life. To clarify the basic terminology of lifelong learning and lifelong education, Cropley (1980) considered learning as a "process of change occurring within people as a result of experience, while education involves the influences which guide or encourage learning" (p.3). He noted that "lifelong education requires the consideration of the changes in education which would be necessary for promoting, supporting, and even improving lifelong learning" (p. 3). Lifelong
education included more than additional schooling and had important consequences not only for moderating problems associated with aging but also for developing later life's potentials. Three important principles of lifelong education are relevant to this current study of learning activities in later life (Cropley, 1977, 1980; Dave, 1976, 1983; Faure, 1972). These include:

1. The vertical integration of learning activities over the life course. This refers to the continuity of learning activities throughout life. Age is not a barrier to educational opportunities and learners can move in and out of the educational system at any age.

2. The horizontal integration of learning activities across formal, nonformal, and informal boundaries. Educational institutions are only one of numerous potential sponsors of learning activities across the life span. Sponsorship of learning activities broadens from traditional educational institutions to include family and community structures.

3. A framework acknowledging the importance of evolving alternatives, sponsors, and forms (Dave, 1976). Innovative learning opportunities, new sponsors, and diversified methods and techniques are legitimated and supported. Learning activities have a dynamic quality and are not trapped behind rigid, historically-based, boundaries.

Concepts of vertical integration, horizontal integration, and innovative evolving opportunities encompass issues relevant to an aging,
learning society. Critics, however, have noted the lack of conceptual clarity surrounding the concept of lifelong education (Elvin, 1975) and remarked that lifelong education often became yet another means of reproducing inequalities that already existed in formal schooling (Labelle, 1981; Paulston, 1980). Elvin (1975) expressed concern that lifelong education was perceived as a "magic formula" (Elvin, 1975, p.26) for solving the problems of formal education. Ohliger (1974) warned that lifelong adult education promoted permanent inadequacy through such structures as mandatory continuing education.

These criticisms, important as they are, do not override the relevance of the basic concepts of lifelong education for an aging society. Flexible, horizontally and vertically integrated learning activities are consistent with the demands of a rapidly changing, aging society. As Gelpi (1979) concluded:

Let us be clear that it is not a matter of giving "power" to older people but of restoring to them the right to live, not merely to survive; to be as others, and not to be left on one side; to continue to enquire into things, to make discoveries and to develop interests of their own. (p. 70)

Modes of Education: Formal, Nonformal, Informal and Self-Directed

Reports by Hiemstra (1976, 1985) and Tough (1971, 1979), along with the results of the author's previously referenced informal survey at the University of British Columbia (Clough, 1988), revealed the importance of alternatives to traditional, institutionally sponsored
learning activities in later life. Weydemeyer (1981) reviewed the importance of alternatives to traditional education across the life span and the growing importance of alternative learning opportunities throughout a person's life. He also noted the educator's responsibility for legitimating, creating, and promoting appropriate nonformal and informal learning activities which evolve to meet changing situations and varied needs. Commenting on the importance of an educative community, Thornton (1986) observed:

Learning opportunities exist in all social institutions - all can perform an educative function and contribute significantly to individual and group development. (p. 76)

The significance of alternatives to formal education, referred to as multiple "modes of transmission" (Colletta & Radcliffe, 1980), is recognized in educational literature (Cropley, 1980; Dave, 1976, 1983; Faure, 1972). This understanding of multiple modes of education has not, as yet, been incorporated into discussions of learning activities in later life. A typology developed by Coombs (1968, 1985) described three important modes of education with significance for the older adult: formal, nonformal, and informal education. Although this typology was not directly measured in this current study, Coomb's categorizations were used as a tool for exploring the diversity of learning activities in later life.

There is continuing controversy about definitions of formal, nonformal and informal education in adult education literature. Darkenwald & Merriam (1982) established a distinction between formal and
informal education based upon sponsorship. According to these authors "we might consider as informal any purposeful, systematic, and sustained learning activity that is not sponsored, planned or directed by an organization" (p. 152). Mocker & Spear (1982), on the other hand, made a distinction between modes of learning based not upon sponsorship but upon the learners control of the means and objectives of learning. They concluded:

- **Formal Learning** - learners have no control over the objectives or means of their learning
- **Nonformal Learning** - learners control the objectives but not the means
- **Informal Learning** - learners control the means but not the objectives
- **Self-Directed Learning** - learners control both the objectives and the means. (p. 4)

The most widely accepted distinctions among formal, nonformal and informal education were established by Coombs (1968, 1985) and Coombs & Ahmed (1974):

1. Formal education refers to the "highly institutionalized chronologically graded and hierarchically structured 'education system' spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).

To date, these formal learning activities have limited appeal to most older adults. In a study of learning preference of older adults Riggott (1983) concluded that "there is little interest among residents
of planned retirement communities. In pursuing academic degrees” (p.78).

2. Nonformal education refers to "any organized systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children" (Coombs, 1985, p. 23). Examples include senior centre programs, self-help groups, and wellness programs offered by government sponsored agencies.

Nonformal learning activities for the older adult are prevalent and diverse. Many activities are specifically targeted for seniors and are organized and sponsored by a wide variety of agencies and organizations. O'Donnell & Berkeley (1980) reported on the growing popularity of Elderhostel which sponsors organized nonformal travel and learning activities for those over 55. Self-help programs, wellness initiatives, and volunteer endeavors are other examples of nonformal education with special relevance for older adults.

3. Informal education refers to "the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment - at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers or books, or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally informal education is unorganized and unsystematic and even unintentional at times" (Coombs, 1985, p. 25).
Informal learning activities are an important segment of learning in later life. Coombs (1985) recently emphasized the importance of informal activities: the increase in the publication of books, the sales of newspapers, and the growth of the media over the past 20 years. He remarked:

Substantial increase in the number of and attendance at public libraries, museums, theatres, exhibitions, and other important vehicles of knowledge, ideas, and culture has further enriched the informal learning environments and the lives of great numbers of people. (p. 95)

The merits and disadvantages of formal, nonformal, and informal education must be analyzed before making important programmatic choices. Nonformal and informal education provide alternatives to traditional formal learning opportunities but can too easily, according to critics, be considered as a remedy for inequalities found in mainstream education. Critics have reported that nonformal education is not necessarily a panacea for structural change (Colletta & Radcliffe, 1980; LaBelle, 1981; Paulston, 1980; Rubenson, 1982), and that nonformal education often serves to extend the social class bias of formal systems and become just another cog in the wheel of economic and cultural reproduction (Bordieu & Passeron, 1977). Coombs (1985) considered that nonformal education could become "a hoax designed to delude the poor into thinking they are getting the real thing" (p.23). Commenting on
educational opportunities for older adults, Radcliffe (1982) remarked on the elitist quality of many educational activities for the elderly:

Like schooling, much of it is comfortably middle-class and is best suited to those who have already had the advantage and the social formation of some critical mass of previous education. (p. 315)

There is no evident consensus in the literature about the position of self-directed learning in a typology of formal, nonformal, and informal education. As previously noted, Mocker & Spear (1982) distinguished self-directed learning from formal, nonformal or informal learning. On the other hand, Darkenwald & Merriam (1982) and Rubenson (1982) associated self-directed learning with the informal sector. In contrast to both of these positions, it would seem reasonable to categorize self-directed learning under Coombs’ definition of nonformal education: learners systematically plan and organize objectives and activities for a specific clientele, themselves. Because of this unresolved typological discrepancy, self-directed learning, in this study, is considered as a separate mode of learning.

Self-directed learning activities refer to learning activities which are primarily self-planned and self-organized. Brookfield (1984) defined self-directed learning as the intentional pursuit of clearly specified learning goals with the learner exercising control over the content and method of learning. This definition recognized the importance of the learner as a central player in selecting and planning
learning activities. Works by Tough (1971, 1979) and Hiemstra (1976) focused on the importance of these self-directed learning activities. Hiemstra (1976) reflected on the relevance of self-direction for the adult educator:

Educators must learn how to remove their institutional blinders and recognize all the self-directed, independent learning going on and needed outside institutional structures. This will require educators to work in new roles, to make new learning opportunities available in new settings, and to make available more and better resources for learning. (p. 337)

Research into the most appropriate uses of varied modes of education must be extended to support and enhance learning for the elderly. Along these lines, Colletta & Radcliffe (1980) suggested that formal, nonformal, and informal modes of transmission weave in and out of one another, taking priority according to changing individual and social developmental tasks in the life course (p. 26). They proposed further research to determine the most appropriate forms of learning activities at various stages of the life course. Perhaps, as Colletta & Radcliffe (1980) postulated, each mode of learning has its special strengths:

Formal transmission is more effective when the educational function is cognitive, abstract, and evaluative...as best represented in the technology of schooling.

Informal transmission is more effective when the educational function is affective, related to values and beliefs...as best illustrated in the socio-cultural techniques of family, peer group, and community.
Non-formal transmission is more effective when the educational function is psychomotor, concrete and skill oriented...as best exemplified in the technologies of the workplace. (p. 25)

Potential Benefits from Participation in Learning Activities

Concepts of a learning society, lifelong education, and lifelong learning provided a framework for this study. The potential benefits from participation in learning opportunities underscore the importance of providing relevant learning opportunities for aging individuals in an aging society. These potential benefits are reviewed from two perspectives:

1. Individual benefits derived from meeting multiple personal "needs" throughout the life course (Birren & Woodruff, 1973; Hiemstra, 1972; Londoner, 1985; McClusky, 1971; Merriam & Lumsden, 1985; Peterson, 1983).

2. Social benefits derived from retraining an aging work force and from easing the financial and social burdens that an aging population places upon health care, social services, family, and community support systems (Dychtwald & Flower, 1989; Lowy & O’Connor, 1986; Moody, 1986).

McClusky (1971) presented five categories of individual needs that could be met through participation in learning activities: (a) coping needs (b) expressive needs (c) contributive needs (d) influence needs, and (e) transcendence needs. In another widely referenced
analysis, Birren and Woodruff (1973) examined the importance of continued learning for alleviation, prevention and enrichment in later life. More recently, the National Advisory Council on Aging (1989) affirmed the importance of learning to survive, learning to cope, learning to give, and learning to grow and enjoy in later life.

Another set of writings shifted away from this consideration of the individual and focused on social benefits derived from participation in learning activities. Two important contemporary social issues concern retraining older workers and decreasing skyrocketing costs of health care services. As the population ages and technology advances, older workers are required to learn new and complex skills. Productive older workers destroy one myth of aging: older workers are not worth the investment of retraining. Dychtwald & Flower (1989) contended:

In the future older workers will be considered not worn out but seasoned, not out of date but able to learn, not ready to retire but open to a more flexible and productive work life."

As societies continue to age, older workers become an important part of the economic development of modern society. Well-developed retraining programs for older workers are an important part of this development process. Moody (1988) observed that:

In a post-industrial economy, human capital formulation on a life-span basis has become strategically important....and that gains in productivity in the future will depend on the retraining of adults and older workers. (p. 191)

A second social and economic issue involves the skyrocketing costs of health care and related services. Participation in learning
activities can provide one important strategy for decreasing demands on these services. Such contemporary endeavors as self-help and wellness groups have educative components with a potential for actively promoting interdependence and for decreasing the dependency of the older population on expensive medical and social services. In a study of health and well-being, Thorne, Griffin & Adlersberg (1986) revealed that older participants "viewed the stimulation of learning as critical to maintaining health and well-being at optimal levels" (p. 17).

Although potential benefits from participation in learning activities appear impressive, important questions remain to be answered. Would these benefits be experienced by all older adults? The answer to that question is, probably not, especially if learning activities are confined to more traditional activities in formal educational institutions. A majority of older adults have no history of participation in formal education; a majority have no involvement in any structured form of adult education. Consequently, it does not appear reasonable that older adults would suddenly frequent traditional activities located in formal educational institutions. Alternatively, it appears likely that innovative learning activities, consistent with the individual's social context and "history as learner" (Thornton, 1986, p. 63) could succeed in challenging potentials and problems posed by aging. Some of these innovative opportunities are already attracting older adult participation: New Horizons programs, Elderhostel, wellness centres, self-help groups, and worker retraining programs.
Other important questions require further research. Could participation in learning activities assist older adults to become less dependent upon social welfare systems? Could older adults learn new careers and reenter the economic structure of society as credits instead of debits (Moody, 1986)? Could the wisdom of a generation who has survived a depression, several wars, and major technological and social revolution be harnessed to address major ecological, social, and economic problems which threaten society (Illich, 1970)? Positive responses to these questions seem reasonable; however, the potential for positive answers appears dependent upon both the construction of more relevant learning opportunities for older adults and upon a more positive view of aging. The older adult is, unfortunately, often considered a liability rather than an asset in a human capital view of society.

This section reviewed potential benefits from participation in learning activities from individual and social perspectives. The following section reviews current research concerning the participation of older adults in learning activities.

Research about Participation in Learning Activities in Later Life

Long (1983) and Percy (1989) identified the variety of inconsistent terminology used by adult educators conducting
participation research. Although limited sampling procedures and definitional inconsistencies between studies must be acknowledged, a great deal of useful information has already been uncovered concerning the participation of older adults in learning activities. This section synthesizes selected significant adult education data concerning older adult participation in adult education and presents relevant research findings concerning the relationship between participation and sociodemographic measures influencing participation.

To date, research about the participation of older adults in learning activities has focused on traditional, institutionally sponsored programs. These studies indicated that the participation of older adults was very low. In a landmark study, Johnstone & Rivera (1965) reported that over one-half of all participants were under forty, and that nearly eighty percent were under fifty. This finding was later supported in research by Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs (1974) who reported that learners tended to be younger and that interest in and participation in learning activities dropped sharply after the age of fifty-five. In a recent Canadian study, Devereaux (1985) suggested that the participation rate of those 65 and over was very low and concluded that "adult learners tended to be relatively young", and that "for both men and women, enrollment declined markedly after the age of 45" (p. 6). These Canadian statistics corroborated earlier U.S. findings (Cross, 1981; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Peterson, 1983; Ventura & Worthy, 1982).
These studies, however, primarily focused on traditional learning activities. Alternatively, research by DeCrow (1975), Tough (1971, 1979), and Hiemstra (1976, 1985) provided a challenge to the relevance of narrow views of participation.

DeCrow (1975) surveyed a wide variety of providers of learning opportunities offered for older adults and summarized the broad range of programs offered through educational institutions and community agencies. DeCrow (1975) noted that older adults were continually learning from daily experience, through personal contacts, and exposure to the mass media as well as in organized learning activities sponsored by numerous agencies (p. 1). In another line of research, Tough (1971, 1979) observed that adults engaged in numerous self-directed learning projects throughout their lives. Hiemstra (1976), extended Tough's (1971) research by focusing on self-directed learning activities in later life. Hiemstra surveyed 214 older male Nebraskans and reported that, on average annually, this group participated in 3.3 diversified learning projects involving 325 hours of learning time. Theories of disengagement and decline no longer were adequate to explain the dynamics of participation for an aging population.

Selected studies suggesting relationships between participation in educational activities in later life and sociodemographic measures influencing participation are reviewed in sections below.
Age

Educational participation is reported to decrease as people age (Graney & Hays, 1976; Harris, 1975; Heisel, 1980; Jarvis, 1985). Peterson (1981) stated that age was a significant variable in determining the educational participation of older adults. Graney & Hays (1976) and Harris (1975) found regression in participation past the age of sixty-five and a significant correlation between more advanced age and a decline in interest in further education. Heisel (1980); Heisel, Darkenwald, and Anderson (1981); Jacobowith and Shanan (1982); and Jarvis (1985) corroborated these findings and reported that the participation of those 55 and over was significantly less than in younger groups.

The underrepresentation of older adults in education has been corroborated by Devereaux (1985) in Canada, Kingston & Drotter (1983) in the United States, and Ryan (1985) in England. Although a convincing picture of decreasing participation with increasing age has recurred in the literature, these cross-sectional studies have dealt with participation in traditional educational enterprises. Alternatively, some recent studies (Borthwick, 1981; Ryan, 1985) have revealed an increase in participation by persons fifty-five and over in less traditional educational activities. Ryan (1985) remarked upon the increasing number of older-old (over 80) enrolled in the Open University in Britain. In the United States, Borthwick (1981) reported that between 1969 and 1975 participation in adult education increased 55.2%
for those 55 and over. In a study of nursing home residents, Check and Wurzback (1984) disclosed that this group of older adults (median age 83) did not associate advanced age with an inability to learn and that over three-fourths of this group reported that people were never too old to learn (p. 38). Reports of the rapid growth of participation by older adults in nontraditional educative opportunities such as New Horizons, Elderhostel, and self-help groups challenge constructs of aging that imply disengagement from learning with increasing age (Morrow-Howell & Ozawa, 1987; O'Donnell & Berkeley, 1980; Novak, 1987).

Gender

No clear picture emerges concerning differences in participation related to gender. Ventura and Worthy (1982) reported that the majority of older students were female. This is supported in research by Heisel, Darkenwald & Anderson (1981), Kingston & Drotter (1983), and Krout (1983). In contradiction to these findings, a higher proportion of older men participated in learning activities in studies by Hooper & March (1978) and Ryan (1985). These studies have only begun to delve into the relationship between gender and participation. This will be a fertile area for further research.

Educational Background

There are consistent reports in the literature that participation in adult education increases with higher levels of previously completed
education (Courtenay & Long, 1987; Covey, 1981; Graney, 1980; Heisel, Darkenwald, & Anderson, 1981; Hooper & March, 1978; Kingston & Drotter, 1983; Peterson, 1983). Devereaux (1985) reported that participation in adult education increased with the amount of schooling previously completed. Courtenay and Long (1987) concluded that level of education was the most important predictor of participation in adult education.

These studies have, however, reported on participation in more traditional learning activities. Alternatively, when measuring participation in activities at senior centres, Krout (1983) found that senior centre users had an average of 1.5 years less education than non-users. He concluded that senior centre use increased as level of completed education decreased. Further research is necessary to verify the relationship between previous levels of education and participation across a wide variety of formal, nonformal, informal and self-directed learning activities.

Socioeconomic Status

Heisel (1980), Jarvis (1985), and Marcus (1978), related higher levels of participation in adult education to higher levels of socioeconomic status. Marcus (1978) inferred that people of lower socioeconomic status did not participate in traditional education. Decreasing participation with decreasing socioeconomic status was also noted in studies of self-directed learning reviewed by Cross (1981). She reported that "adults who were not involved in learning projects were
likely to be poorly educated, poorly paid, older rural residents" (Cross, 1981, p. 64).

Alternatively, however, Krout (1983) reported that older persons of lesser means were more likely to be interested in and use the services and programs offered by senior centres. These conflicting reports encourage research endeavors to examine a broader spectrum of nonformal, informal and self-directed modes of learning.

Measures of Well-being

None of the studies reviewed for this project considered the relationship between participation in learning activities and measures of well-being. Several studies, however, made speculations about this relationship appear reasonable. In a summary of thirty years of research on well-being, Larson (1978) concluded:

The research on the relationship between social activity and well-being, and the research on an array of different measures of activities and on different populations shows in general that these two variables are positively related. (p.115)

Palmore (1974, 1981) and Palmore & Luikart (1972, 1974) reported on the relationship between participation in organized activity and well-being. Palmore and Luikart (1974) contended that "the second strongest variable related to life satisfaction was organizational activity" (p. 192). These authors noted that there was most likely a two way effect: people derived substantial life satisfaction from participation in such activities; depressed persons with low life
satisfaction withdrew from activities. Palmore (1981), rejecting a disengagement model of aging, observed that higher social activity tended to be associated with higher morale and life satisfaction.

In a recent study of older adults, Thornton & Collins (1984, 1986) observed that participation in leisure activity and physical activity increased as self-reports of life satisfaction increased. Participation functioned in enhancing one's free-time and in contributing to a healthy and productive lifestyle (Thornton & Collins, 1986, p. 6). In this research there was a clear sense that remaining physically and intellectually active "helps one enjoy a healthy, vigorous, and satisfying life and can reverse the effects of many life style habits that influence the health care needs of the elderly" (Thornton & Collins, 1986, p. 6).

Although participation in activities was reported to increase with higher ratings of well-being, to date, no studies have been located that relate well-being to participation in learning activities. In this current study, two components of well-being were measured and related to participation in learning activities: life satisfaction and self-reported health status.

Social Context

Three indicators of an individual's social context receiving increasing attention in contemporary gerontology literature are social
support, social network, and presence of a confidant. Social support, according to Kahn (1979), refers to:

interpersonal transactions that include one or more of the following: the expression of positive affect of one person towards another; the affirmation or endorsement of another person's behavior, perceptions, or expressed views; the giving of symbolic or material aid to another. (p. 85)

Along similar lines, Chiraboga (1987) referred to a more structural term, social network, that included the number of social ties and frequency of contact. In an attempt to synthesize the importance of these issues in later life Chiraboga (1987) reported:

With the growing recognition of social and physical stressors as disruptive forces in the lives of the elderly, gerontologists have also begun to examine social others as potential mediators and buffers against the impact of stressors. (p. 635)

Lowenthal and Haven (1968) initiated work on confiding relationships and, Antonucci (1985) and Lowenthal and Robinson (1976) reported that the presence of a confidant in old age is associated with lower levels of loneliness, better adjustment to widowhood, and higher levels of self-esteem and mental and physical health.

Based upon these reports, it seemed reasonable to hypothesize that dimensions of social support would influence participation in learning activities. Price and Lyon (1982) considered the absence of a companion as a barrier to participation in later life. These researchers found that having no one to go with deterred older adults from attending educational events. Although issues of social support and social network are receiving increasing attention in contemporary
gerontological research, these issues have only received limited attention in adult education literature.

Changes in Participation

Research reviewed for this current project did not uncover publications which addressed changes in participation in learning activities across the life course. In order to provide some foundation for further research, respondents in this study were asked to report on changes in their participation since age forty in each of 71 learning activities.

No consensus has been reached in the literature on issues of continuity or change in aging. Cumming & Henry (1961) supported a disengagement view of aging which envisioned a mutual social and individual withdrawal with increasing aging. This disengagement model envisioned the individual retreating into a smaller world while society withdrew from the aging individual. In Middle Age and Aging, Neugarten (1968) and contributors explored potentials, continuities, and changes in later life. These authors challenged the false dichotomy of activity versus disengagement in later years and proposed that personality across the life course "is a pivotal dimension ... and that, in normal men and women, there is no sharp discontinuity of personality with age" (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1968, p. 177).

Peppers (1976) found that there was a continuity of activity between pre and post retirement years, and that "isolate activity
appeared to be a function of earlier activity patterns and not a function of retirement itself" (p.444). Along the same lines, Atchley (1977) concluded:

At all phases of the life course, predispositions constantly evolve from interactions among personal preferences, biological and psychological capabilities, situational opportunities, and experience. Change is thus an adaptive process involving interaction among all of these elements. (p. 27)

Reasons for Participation

Because of the voluntary nature of adult education, Boshier (1985b) contended that it was important for adult educators to know what motivated people to participate. Several studies (Boshier, 1976, 1977; Boshier & Riddell, 1978; Houle, 1961; Morstain & Smart, 1974) have provided typologies about the reasons why adults participate in adult education activities.

One early typology, developed by Houle (1961), proposed three learner orientations to explain participation:

1. **Goal oriented learners** who used education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives.

2. **Activity oriented learners** who participated because they found a meaning in the circumstances of the learning which often had no connection with the content or announced purposes of the activity.

3. **Learning oriented learners** who participated in order to gain knowledge for its own sake.
In an attempt to test and develop Houle’s typology, Boshier (1977) developed a widely used model to describe reasons for participation based upon responses to the Education Participation Scale. The six factors groups used to explain participation included (Boshier, 1985b, p. 150):

1. **Social contact** - participants wanted to make or continue friendships, to be accepted by others, to improve relationships and their social position. Participants had a need for group activities and congenial friendships.

2. **Social stimulation** - participants wanted to overcome the frustration of day-to-day living, to escape intellectual narrowness, and to have a few hours away from other responsibilities.

3. **Professional advancement** - participants wanted to improve their employment position and secure professional advancement. They participated for job related reasons.

4. **Community service** - participants enrolled for this factor want to be more effective as citizens, to prepare for community service, and to improve their ability to participate in community work.

5. **External expectations** - participants were complying with the wishes of someone else. They were enrolled on the recommendation of some authority.

6. **Cognitive interest** - participants enrolled for the enjoyment of learning for its own sake.
In a further analysis of this model, Boshier & Riddell (1978) argued that the category of professional advancement should be dropped as a motivating factor in scales of older adult participation.

Using motivational categories similar to Boshier's (1985b) six factor clusters, other researchers have reported on the multiple and diverse motivational orientations of older adults: Fisher (1986) and Kingston (1982) described the motivational importance of cognitive interest; Romaniuk & Romaniuk (1982) and Sprouse (1981) considered the importance of social stimulation; Devereaux (1985) and Heisel, Darkenwald, and Anderson (1981), reported on the relevance of employment motivation in many younger seniors. The results of an informal survey conducted at the University of British Columbia Summer Program for Retired Persons suggested the importance of six additional motivational categories used in this current study: personal development, physical fitness, health, relaxation, entertainment, and keeping one's mind alive (Clough, 1988).

A consensus has been reached in the literature which recognizes the importance of diverse motivational orientations across the life span. Along the same lines, Courtenay (1989) observed that:

Most educational gerontology literature indicates a heterogeneous older population. Consequently more than one ultimate purpose and more than one clientele should be considered in designing educational experiences for older people. (p. 532)
Recently, in another line of research, Thornton and Collins (1984) proposed that those who were aging successfully would report more participation in leisure and physical activities and would also be able to give more reasons for their participation. These researchers presented a checklist of 27 potential reasons for participation in leisure and physical activities and found that as participation in leisure and physical activities increased, the number of reasons for participation also increased. Thornton & Collins (1984) recommended that further research be conducted concerning learning activities in later life.

Barriers to Participation

Barriers to participation in adult education are extensively reviewed in the literature. Cross (1981) acknowledged the importance of this area of research while Price & Lyon (1982) concluded that barriers to participation were an important factor in determining enrollment in educational activities. Cross’ (1981) categorization of barriers to participation provides a useful typology for understanding various obstacles to participation in educational activities across the life course. Selected studies of barriers to participation for the older adult are reviewed using Cross’s (1981) typology of situational, institutional and dispositional barriers.

Situational barriers are obstacles arising from personal situations in life at a given time. Borthwick (1981), Fishtein & Feier
(1982), and Goodrow (1975) cited transportation as a significant situational barrier for older adults. Health is another important barrier in later life noted by Heisel (1980). Hearing (Kingston & Drotter, 1983) and vision (Goodrow, 1975) also presented obstacles to participation in later life. Other situational barriers, with special relevance in later life, included income and financial resources (Borthwick, 1983); home responsibilities (Goodrow, 1975); lack of time (Graney, 1980); and, location in the community (Borthwick, 1983).

Institutional barriers are obstacles which involve all the practices and procedures of the sponsoring institution that discourage participation. Goodrow (1975) indicated that strict attendance, scheduling, and too much "red tape" were barriers for the older adult population. Kingston (1982) and Kingston and Drotter (1983) reported that poor parking was a deterrent for older learners, while other authors mentioned the cost of a program as a negative influence on participation (Danes et Al, 1982, reported in Jarvis, 1985; Romaniuk, 1983). Inadequate information distribution has also been recognized as an institutional barrier in later life (Graney & Hays, 1976; Heisel, 1980; Windley & Scheidt, 1983).

Dispositional barriers are obstacles related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as learner. Ventura & Worthy (1982) concluded that lack of interest was the major barrier to participation for the older student. This was also reported to be a major barrier to older adult participation in several other studies (Graney, 1980; Krout,
Goodrow (1975) and Borthwick (1981) remarked that many older adults felt that they were too old to learn. Older adults often feared educational settings (Peterson, 1981) or the competition involved in educational pursuits (Fishtein & Feier, 1982). Negative attitudes towards faculty and staff were barriers cited by Borthwick (1981).

Recent studies explored the effects of social and economic patterns on participation for older learners (Courtenay, 1989; Covey, 1981, Cross, 1981; Marcus, 1978, Radcliffe, 1982). In an analysis of social forces, Covey (1981) observed that the terminal and youth orientation of schooling was perceived as a barrier by older adults. Cross (1981) reviewed the importance of the perception, held by many elders, that learning is for the young. Along these same lines, Courtenay (1989) concluded:

The terminal perspective of learning implicitly doubts the capability of older adults and defines the older students learning interests as primarily of a recreational nature. (p. 531)

Considering the influence of socioeconomic status on participation, Marcus (1978) and Radcliffe (1982) observed that persons of lower socioeconomic status were less likely to participate in traditional adult education endeavors. Radcliffe (1982) contended that educational offerings for older adults were often elitist and served "a clientele who are better able than others to articulate their needs and interests" (p. 315).
Organizational Choices Made by Older Adults

When older adults choose to participate in a learning activity, they also express preferences about the sponsorship and organization of these activities. Preferences about sponsorship, topic or content area choices, and preferences about participation in age-integrated or age-segregated activities are reviewed in this section.

Sponsoring Agency

In this study, sponsorship refers to the agency that plans, organizes, or implements a learning activity. Recent studies reveal sponsorship trends and the importance of community sponsors of learning activities for older adults. Harris (1981) compared responses to the question "Where did you take courses?" from 1974 and 1981 data and remarked on the sharp decrease in older adults studying at churches (from 24% in 1974 to 5% in 1981) or through correspondence programs (from 10% to 1%). Ventura and Worthy (1982) reported that in 1981 almost one-quarter of the adult learners over the age of 65 population enrolled in courses through community or senior centre activities.

In a secondary analysis of data from the National Center of Educational Statistics (1981) publication, Heisel, Darkenwald, and
Anderson (1981) observed differences in sponsorship of courses by the age of participant. These authors noted that:

In general older adults prefer courses given in community organizations to those given in any other site, including schools and colleges, and that this preference tended to increase with age. (p. 237)

Other studies revealed the diversity of sponsorship for learning activities in later life. DeCrow (1975) noted that although older adults learned from activities of everyday life, through interaction with family and friends, and through mass communications, many learning activities were being sponsored by non-school agencies: libraries, museums, churches, parks and recreation departments, business and numerous volunteer and community organizations.

The need for diverse sponsorship of learning activities in later life recurs throughout the literature. Recognizing this, challenges us as educators to look beyond the walls of educational institutions towards collaborative efforts involving older adults and community resources. Multiple educational needs and potentials in later life cannot be met by formal institutions alone but can best be met by a wide variety of formal, nonformal, and informal educational programs and agencies (Colletta & Radcliffe, 1980; Cremin, 1976; Gelpi, 1979). As Cross (1981) pointed out, no amount of formal education during youth can prepare adults, young or old, for the future they must face. Consequently, formal education, often equated with "schooling" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982) and concepts of courses and textbooks becomes only part of the total landscape of learning activities in later
life. The broad spectrum of sponsorship has not, as yet, been adequately explored in educational participation studies.

Although diverse sponsorship is necessary to meet the varied needs of the elderly population, this diversity also signals problems for attracting financial and political support. Courtenay & Long (1987) observed one dichotomy that arises from diversified sponsorship of learning activities for the elderly. They reported:

On the one hand, the current programs reflect the heterogeneous nature of the older adult because the providers and subject matter are so varied. At the same time, older adults suffer the absence of a unified system to advocate, coordinate, and assist to fund education for the elderly. (p. 95)

Two issues related to preferences for sponsoring agencies are reviewed in recent literature: the relationship between participation and familiarity with a sponsor and the importance of innovative and evolving sponsors. Peterson (1981) reported that familiarity with a sponsor, for example with its reputation and accessibility, were important motivating factors in the decisions of older adults to enroll in a program. A second issue concerns the significance of innovative sponsorship for later life learning activities. In recent years, innovative opportunities provided by such organizations as New Horizons (Novak, 1987), Elderhostel (O'Donnell & Berkeley, 1980) and self-help groups (Morrow-Howell & Ozawa, 1987) have attracted large numbers of older adult participants. Both of these issues require further research.
Any discussion of sponsorship is incomplete without some mention of self-direction. Self-directed activities are largely self-planned, but often involve the use of formal, nonformal, or informal resources. The importance of these self-directed activities in later life is noted in the literature (Brockett, 1985, 1987; Hiemstra, 1972, 1985; Tough, 1971, 1979). Research into self-direction has shifted the focus of attention from the institution or subject matter to the individual as learner and has suggested the importance of existing learning networks in an adult’s life (Brookfield, 1984). Successful learning activities for the older learner will recognize and enhance these personal and social networks.

**Topic and Content Area**

Learning activities in later life vary even more in content than in sponsorship. Early studies by Johnstone & Rivera (1965) and Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs (1974) indicated that interest in general education and vocational training declined markedly with aging, while the study of religion increased with age. Recent studies provide a more contemporary picture concerning the extent and diversity of content choices in later life. Ventura & Worthy (1982, p.22) concluded that older persons participated in a wide variety of courses that provided (a) a continued sense of meaning in their lives through such areas as religion, philosophy, and art courses, and (b) a sense of control or coping
through such programs as physical education, health care sciences, and business courses.

Several studies have investigated the instrumental and expressive orientations of learning activities in later life (Havighurst, 1976; Hiemstra 1982; Londoner, 1971, 1985). According to Havighurst (1976), "instrumental education is education for a goal that lies outside and beyond the act of education. In this form, education is an instrument for changing the learner's situation" (p.41). On the other hand, expressive education is "viewed as an activity that has its gratification within the learning situation itself. The educational consumer participates in the activity solely for the gratification it provides at the moment" (Londoner, 1971, p.113). In reality, many educational activities have both instrumental and expressive qualities and there is still controversy about this educational dichotomy (Londoner, 1985). There has been some consensus in the literature about the importance of instrumental activities in later life (Londoner, 1971). Recent work by Hiemstra (1982) has also demonstrated the significance of expressive choices and suggested that "interests vary across a wide variety of possible course areas and within both the expressive and instrumental domains" (p.152). Further research will begin to answer questions which still surround the issue of instrumental and expressive orientations.
Courtenay & Long (1987) reviewed the literature on content preferences in later life and concluded:

It is difficult to generalize about the older adult. True, many are interested in college study, liberal arts courses particularly; but many are also interested in vocational topics, business topics, health issues, literacy, ad infinitum. Thus the generalization is that the nature of the group will dictate subject matter preference. (p. 90)

In a secondary analysis of data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, Heisel, Darkenwald & Anderson (1981) provided a useful analysis of content selection by the age, gender, and educational attainment of older participants. There was a sharp decrease in participation in professional, technical/vocational, managerial, safety, and high school and college credit courses after the age of 70. This analysis also indicated that gender appeared to be a key variable in relation to content choices: among women, 50% of their participation was accounted for by courses on hobbies and personal improvement. Among men, 50% of their participation was accounted for by professional courses. From a Canadian perspective, Devereaux (1985) reported that men of retirement age were most likely to participate in personal development courses while women over 65 were most likely to participate in hobby courses. Previous education also influenced content choices: participants in safety and home and family living courses had less than a high school education, while classes in professional or managerial skills were primarily attended by those with university degrees (Heisel, Darkenwald, and Anderson, 1981, p. 233).
Age-Segregated and Age-Integrated Settings

One issue receiving attention in contemporary adult education research concerns the effectiveness of age-segregated and age-integrated programs in later life. Courtenay (1989) recently commented on the value of intergenerational programs for older adults: "programs in which two generations learn together result in each generation learning more about the other and exiting the experience with positive attitudes about each other" (p.529). Sprouse (1981), on the other hand, noted that older adults often preferred learning in age-segregated activities and felt more secure in these non-threatening situations. To date, research concerning age-segregated and age-integrated activities has not been conclusive and two conflicting pictures have emerged.

On one side of the issue, when analyzing responses of older adults auditing free university classes on a space available basis in the Wisconsin area, Hooper & March (1978) reported that 91% (127) of respondents preferred classes with a mixture of younger and older students. Of these, 84 (66%) reported enjoying the stimulation of mixed generations while 25 (37%) revealed that they did not want to be stereotyped in an "older only" group (p. 325). Along similar lines, in an exploratory study of 225 older people, Covey (1981) concluded that older people preferred activities which encouraged interaction with younger students. Price & Bromert (1980) perceived that participation in age-integrated learning activities could expose learners to a variety
of new perspectives and that these new perspectives could become an important part of the decision making process for each group.

On the other side of the issue, however, many older adults prefer participating with members of their own age group (Peterson & Orgren, 1982). Sprouse (1981) concluded that age-integrated courses were likely to attract those elderly who are younger, better educated, and more affluent. Those older, less educated and less affluent were more attracted to community-based, age-segregated programs. Perhaps age-segregated activities provide a secure sense of fellowship to less educationally or economically privileged older adults.

Further research is necessary to understand the age-segregated and age-integrated preferences of later life learners. In a time of potential intergenerational conflict, educational programs should maximize the contact between generations. Nonetheless, programs are needed that ameliorate the fears and insecurities of poorer, less educated older adults. Perhaps the question is not "Are age-segregated or age-integrated programs more effective?", but, "When are age-segregated more appropriate?", and, "When are age-integrated programs more appropriate?"

Summary

Participation in learning activities is essential in a rapidly changing and aging society. Participation in learning activities
contributes to maintaining and establishing interdependent, positive lifestyles; to decreasing dependency on expensive health care and social services; and to decreasing social inequalities that subsequently influence participation. A framework for understanding participation in learning activities has emerged in the literature of lifelong education. This framework includes concepts of vertical integration of learning throughout the life span; horizontal integration of learning activities across informal, nonformal, and formal structures; and, legitimating new organizational structures and innovative programs.

A typology developed by Coombs (1985) provides a useful tool for examining the structure of learning activities in later life. This typology examines the significance of three modes of education: formal, nonformal, and informal education. Reports by Decrow (1975), Hiemstra (1976), and Courtenay (1989) confirm the importance of alternatives to traditional, institutionally-based education for later life learners. Nonformal, informal and self-directed learning activities are important components of a diverse landscape of learning activities in later life.

Participation research provides useful information about participation in traditional adult education activities and about the relationship between this participation and sociodemographic measures. Most studies reported that the participation of older adults was low. The older adult participant was more likely to be younger, better educated, and of higher socioeconomic status. There was no consensus in the literature about the relationship between gender and participation.
The predominant motivations for participating in learning activities were reported to be learning and socially-oriented. The main barriers to participation spanned Cross's typology of situational, institutional and dispositional barriers. There was little information in the literature about changes in participation from middle to later life.

Research findings suggested preferences about the sponsorship and organization of learning activities in later life. Preferred sponsors include a diverse number of agencies and organizations outside of formal institutional settings. Choices about topic or content area vary greatly among individuals. Preferences for age-integrated or age-segregated activities appear related to educational and economic status. Better educated older adults of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in age-integrated activities while less educated older adults of lower means appear to prefer to participate in age-segregated learning activities.

This chapter summarized relevant concepts and research related to the participation of older adults in learning activities. The following chapter reviews the design of this current study.
III. METHODOLOGY

This study was developed to survey a broader range of learning activities engaged in by older adults than is currently discussed in the literature. It was designed to identify and characterize these learning activities and to explore the relationship between participation and selected personal and sociodemographic measures influencing participation.

Because of the large number of personal and sociodemographic variables measured in this study, it was necessary to obtain information from a large number of respondents. After consultation with adult educators, older adults, and senior centre administrators, a descriptive study, using a survey-mail questionnaire (Appendix B), was chosen as the most appropriate design for this study. A descriptive study was considered appropriate because, after reviewing the literature, it became apparent that there was limited research on participation across a broad spectrum of formal, nonformal, informal, and self-directed learning activities in later life. The questionnaire survey format allowed the researcher to obtain a considerable amount of information from a large number of older adults, in varied settings within a reasonable period of time.

Several research hypotheses were developed based upon the literature review. Then, a questionnaire, Learning Activities in Later Life, was compiled, pilot tested, revised, and distributed. Finally,
returned questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS/PC+, Version 3.0 (SPSS, Inc., 1988), statistical package. Six aspects of the research design are discussed below: (a) development of research hypotheses, (b) design of the research instrument, (c) selection of operational measures, (d) respondents in the study, (e) advantages and limitations of the design, and (f) data analysis

Development of Research Hypotheses

Eight research questions, presented in Chapter I, provided a framework for exploring the literature concerning learning activities in later life. The following research hypotheses were developed in order to operationalize these questions:

1. Relationship between participation and sociodemographic variables:

1.a. Younger seniors participate in a greater number of learning activities.

1.b. Older adults with higher incomes have higher rates of participation in learning activities.

1.c. Older adults with more education participate in a greater number of learning activities.

1.d. There is no significant difference in rates of participation in learning activities due to gender.
1.e. Older adults who participate in more learning activities report higher levels of life satisfaction.

1.f. Older adults who participate in more learning activities report more positive health status.

1.g. Older adults who live with someone report greater participation in learning activities.

1.h. Older persons with a confidant report greater participation in learning activities.

1.i. Older persons reporting belonging to community or professional organizations have greater participation in learning activities.

2. Changes in participation since age forty:

2.a. There are no significant differences in reports of changes in participation since age forty by age of respondent.

2.b. There are no significant differences in reports of changes in participation since age 40 by gender of respondent.

3. Organizational choices made by older adults:

3.a. The most important sponsors of learning activities in later life are nonformal and informal organizations and not formal education institutions.

3.b. Older seniors choose to participate in learning activities primarily in the daytime.
3.c. Older seniors choose to participate in learning activities alone rather than in groups.

3.d. Older seniors choose to participate in learning activities with members of their own age group.

4. As participation in learning activities increases, so does the number of reported reasons for participation increases.

5. As participation in learning activities decreases, the number of reported barriers to participation increases.


Design of the Research Instrument

In order to explore participation in a broad range of learning activities, a checklist of 41 learning activities in later life was developed from responses to an informal survey conducted by this researcher at the University of British Columbia’s Summer Program for Retired Persons in June, 1988 (Clough, 1988). This activity list was expanded, based upon the findings from several important adult education participation studies (Carp, Peterson & Roelf, 1974; Cross, 1981; DeCrow, 1975; Devereaux, 1985; Heisel, Darkenwald, & Anderson, 1981; Hiemstra, 1976, 1985; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Peterson, 1983; Thornton & Collins, 1984, 1986; Ventura & Worthy, 1982). Thirty additional
activities were added to the original 41 learning activities to complete a checklist composed of 71 activities.

Subsequently, a questionnaire was prepared with two parts:

1. A checklist of 71 learning activities followed by questions about frequency of participation, reasons for participation, participation either alone or in groups, changes in participation since age forty, and whether the respondent felt that learning was involved in each of these learning activities.

2) Twenty-one questions concerning sociodemographic variables describing the respondent and thought to influence participation.

This questionnaire was pilot tested during two focus group interviews at two senior centres in the greater Vancouver area. The members of the pilot groups (n=8) noted that the checklist was too complex to answer on an activity by activity basis. They recommended a list of activities followed by a maximum of two questions concerning each activity: frequency of participation and changes in participation since the age of forty. These pilot groups helped correct ambiguities in the questionnaire and confirmed that the proposed checklist reflected most seniors' views concerning learning activities. The questionnaire was revised, sent back to the pilot groups for additional comment, and finalized.
Selection of Operational Measures

The following operational definitions were developed to provide a standardized way of measuring selected personal and demographic variables suspected of influencing participation:

1. Perceived Health Status. Perceived health status was measured by an individual’s response to the following question:

   For your age do you consider your health?
   1. Very poor
   2. Poor
   3. Fair
   4. Good
   5. Excellent

2. Perceived Life Satisfaction. Perceived life satisfaction was measured by an individual’s response to the following question:

   How satisfied are you with your life these days?
   1. Very dissatisfied
   2. Dissatisfied
   3. Satisfied
   4. Very satisfied

3. Living Arrangement. Living arrangement was measured by an individual’s response to the following question:

   With whom do you live?
   1. Alone
   2. With others
4. Presence of a Confidant. Presence of a confidant was measured by response to the following question:

Is there a special person you trust or confide in?
   1. No
   2. Yes

5. Organizational Affiliation. Organizational affiliation was measured by responses to the following question:

Do you belong to a senior centre, community, church, or professional group?
   1. No
   2. Yes

6. Sponsorship. Sponsorship of learning activities was measured by responses to the following question:

Please circle all the groups that plan of offer important learning activities for you these days.
   1. Business or industry
   2. Media: TV or radio
   3. Senior Centres
   4. Other community or government agencies
   5. Yourself
   6. Churches
   7. Schools, colleges, universities
   8. Other (Please write in)

7. Reasons for Participation. Reasons for participation in learning activities were measured by a respondent’s choice of important reasons for engaging in learning activities. The question used in this study was developed from Houle’s (1961) and Boshier’s (1977, 1985b) motivational categories and expanded from the results of an informal survey at the University of British Columbia (Clough, 1988). The question stated:

Please circle all the important reasons why you take part in learning activities these days.
   1. Meeting or being with friends
2. Gaining knowledge or skills
3. For my job or work
4. Because someone recommended it
5. For the community
6. To escape from boredom
7. For my health
8. For physical fitness
9. For relaxation
10. For entertainment
11. For personal development
12. To keep my mind alive
13. As a break from routine

8. Barriers to Participation. Barriers to participation were measured by self-reports of factors which were perceived as interfering with participation in learning activities. The question, including barriers suggested by Cross' (1981, p.98) situational, institutional, and dispositional categories, stated:

Please circle all the important reasons that stop you from taking part in more learning activities these days.

1. Money
2. Transportation
3. Seeing or hearing problems
4. I'm too old
5. Family responsibilities
6. Too busy
7. No one to go with
8. I'd feel uncomfortable
9. Location of the activity
10. I'm not interested
11. Time of day the activity is offered
12. Health problems
13. Registration problems
14. Not enough information
15. I don't see any value for me
16. Other (Please write in):
9. Changes in Participation. Changes in participation were calculated on both an activity and an individual basis. For each activity, respondents were asked to report if the participated "less", "about the same", or "more" than when they were 40. A rate of change of participation for each activity reflected the average report of change in each activity across all respondents. For each respondent, a change index reflected an individual’s average self-report of change in participation since age forty across all 71 learning activities.

10. Number of Learning Activities. For each respondent this variable tallied the total number of self-reported learning activities.

11. Participation Rate. Each respondent reported how frequently they engaged in each of 71 learning activities (Daily=1; Weekly=2; Monthly=3; Quarterly=4; Annually=5; Never=6). The participation rate was an individual’s average participation across all activities.

12. Total Number of Sponsoring Agencies. For each respondent, this variable tallied of the total number of reported sponsoring agencies for learning activities.

13. Total Number of Reasons for Participation. For each respondent, this variable summed the number of reported reasons for participation in learning activities.

14. Total Number of Barriers to Participation. For each respondent, this variable tallied the total number of reported barriers to participation in learning activities.
Respondents in the Study

Questionnaires (n=1228) were distributed to four groups of volunteer non-institutionalized adults over the age of 55:

1. Pilot Group. A pilot test group consisting of two small groups (n=8) of adults 55 and over was contacted through working contacts at two senior centres in the Vancouver area.

2. Senior Centres. 403 questionnaires were distributed through senior centres in the Vancouver, Fraser Valley, and Okanagan areas of British Columbia. The response rate for this group was 59% (n=238).

3. University Programs for Seniors. 95 questionnaires were distributed through university older adult programs. The response rate was 64% (n=61) for this group.

4. Senior Housing Projects. 730 questionnaires distributed through senior housing projects. The response rate for this group was 5% (n=33).

In total 332 questionnaires were returned. The overall response rate was 27%.

Advantages and Limitations of the Design

Survey research is concerned with gathering data, which, if properly done, provides useful and important information for educators
A survey questionnaire format using a mailed questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate design for this study.

Advantages of the Design

1. The questionnaire (Appendix B) provided a means for accumulating a large amount of data from a large population in a relatively limited amount of time and at a limited cost.

2. An explanatory cover letter to the questionnaire (Appendix A) served as an effective introduction to the project for many seniors who were skeptical about "yet another study on old guys."

3. The questionnaire provided a standardized way for collecting data from a diverse group of subjects.

4. The questionnaire format provided a focus for discussion with groups and individuals. Thus, the questionnaire served to focus further in-depth discussion captured in the field notes.

Limitations of the Design

Despite advantages, there were methodological limitations of the design which must be considered when interpreting the data:

1. The printed questionnaire format assumed that potential respondents would be able to read and answer in writing a large number of questions concerning their participation in learning activities. Literacy was an important problem for respondents at two senior housing complexes. Here, administrators indicated that many residents were not
able to read and had very low levels of completed education. In order to provide assistance for adults who could not read or complete the questionnaire the researcher offered to assist adults in the completion of the questionnaire. Only two respondents, however, accepted this assistance.

2. Response rates to a mailed questionnaire are often poor. This became evident in the returns from senior housing complexes where return rates had never exceeded 4%, even on issues critical to residents' lives. In order to reduce this effect, the researcher provided prepaid envelopes, and, where possible, enlisted senior assistants to remind participants to complete and return questionnaires. At housing complexes senior assistants placed posters in laundry facilities and elevators which emphasized the importance of the study. This approach must, however, be reevaluated for future research projects considering the very low response rate from housing residents.

3. The mailed questionnaire format provided limited opportunities for in-depth discussion of the questions with respondents. In order to present a more personal analysis of learning from the older adult point of view, the researcher encouraged discussion centered on the questionnaire. These discussions were thematically analyzed and reported in Chapter V.

4. The initial sample of respondents was weighted heavily towards senior centre users and yielded disproportionate number of females. In order to correct for this, two university programs and two housing
complexes were added to the sample group. Also, two senior centres were contacted to provide additional male respondents. The imbalances in the sample must be acknowledged in any discussion of findings.

Data Analysis

Three hundred and thirty-two questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the SSPS/PC+ V.3.0 (SPSS Inc., 1988) statistical package at the University of British Columbia. Initially, frequency tables were constructed for each of the major variables in the study. Then, appropriate cross-tabulations and correlations were run to determine significant relationships between measures of participation in learning activities and selected personal and sociodemographic variables influencing participation. These correlations provided an insight into relationships which were further investigated using means tests and plotting techniques where appropriate. Significant correlations confirmed or rejected relationships but did not, however, determine causality. Further research is required to determine causal relationships between sociodemographic variables and measures of participation.

A preliminary factor analysis of participation was carried out to determine if learning activities clustered into meaningful factor groupings. This factor analysis will be refined in subsequent analysis of the data.
This study was designed to explore participation in learning activities during later life because of the importance of this issue for older adults and because of the challenges a rapidly aging population poses for adult educators and community leaders. This chapter presents findings from 332 questionnaires completed by non-institutionalized volunteer respondents over the age of 55. These findings are reported in the following sections:

- Portrait of respondents
- Learning activities in later life
- Most important learning activities in later life
- Individual participation in learning activities
- Sociodemographic measures influencing participation
- Changes in participation since age 40
- Organizational choices made by older adults
- Reasons for participation in learning activities
- Barriers to participation in learning activities
- Factor analysis of 71 learning activities

Portrait of Respondents

**Age and Gender**

Three hundred and thirty-two volunteer non-institutionalized adults over the age of 55 completed and returned by mail a questionnaire
about learning activities in later life. These respondents were contacted through senior centres (n=238), through university programs for retired persons (n=61), and through two senior housing projects (n=33) in the City of Vancouver and Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. The mean age of respondents in this study was 70.0 years, spanning a range from 55 to 91 years. Seventy-four percent of respondents were females; 23% were male; 3% did not respond to this question. These results are summarized in Table 1.

**Work, Income and Education**

Over 83% of respondents were fully retired; less than 1% were fully employed. The median income for respondents income was $20,000.00 spanning a range from $1,200.00 to $110,000.00. Many respondents remarked that an income question was an invasion of their privacy; consequently, 37% of respondents did not answer this question. The median level of completed education for this group was "some vocational technical education" after high school. Completed educational levels ranged from some elementary (1.8%) to post graduate completed (6.9%). These results are summarized in Table 2.
TABLE 1

Portrait of Respondents: Age & Gender

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<th>VARIABLE &amp; VALUE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-60 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-65 years</td>
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<td>80-85 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-91 years</td>
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<td>0.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
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# TABLE 2

**Portrait of Respondents: Work, Income & Education**

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<th>VARIABLES &amp; VALUES</th>
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<td>Ret/Work PtTime</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work PtTime/pay</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Full Time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>5.1%</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>under $10000</td>
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<td>$10000-20000</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>$20000-30000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary completed</td>
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<td>4.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Non-univ Professional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>
Ratings of Life Satisfaction and Health Status

Respondents generally reported positive levels of life satisfaction and health status. The mean rating of life satisfaction was "Satisfied"; the mean self-report of health was "Good". Over 82% reported being at least "Satisfied" with their lives and a majority (76%) reported being in at least "Good" health. These results are summarized in Table 3.

Social Context

Four measures related to an individual's social context were reported in this study: marital status, living arrangement, presence of a confidant, and belonging to a community or professional organization (Table 4). Although over 40% of respondents were married; 34% were widowed; 23% were either single, separated or divorced; 3% did not respond to this question. A majority of respondents (53.9%) reported living alone; 46.1% reported living with another in various arrangements. A large majority (81.0%) reported having a confidant, and, over 85% reported having organizational affiliations.

In comparison with recent Canadian statistics (Statistics Canada, 1987, 1989a, 1989b), this current sample of respondents was more likely to be female, less likely to be married and had somewhat higher incomes than the Canadian averages for those 55 and over. These differences must be considered when making generalizations from this current sample of respondents.
TABLE 3

Self-Reports of Life Satisfaction and Health Status

<table>
<thead>
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<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<td><strong>LIFE SATISFACTION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>167</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
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<td>5.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **HEALTH STATUS**     |        |            |
| Excellent             | 92     | 27.7%      |
| Good                  | 159    | 47.9%      |
| Fair                  | 61     | 18.4%      |
| Poor                  | 11     | 3.3%       |
| Very Poor             | 2      | .6%        |
| No Response           | 7      | 2.1%       |
| TOTAL                 | 332    | 100.0%     |
TABLE 4

Measures of Social Context

<table>
<thead>
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<th>VARIABLES &amp; VALUES</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<td>Divorced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>3.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIVES ALONE OR WITH OTHERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives Alone</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lives with Others</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</strong></td>
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<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Activities in Later Life

Seventy-one learning activities were studied from two perspectives: the number of participants in each activity and the mean frequency of participation in each activity. The greatest percentage of respondents engaged in the following ten learning activities (see Table 5):

- Talking with family or friends (100%)
- Reading newspapers or magazines (99%)
- Watching news (97%)
- Listening to the radio (97%)
- Watching other than educational TV (97%)
- Reading books or plays (96%)
- Walking (96%)
- Writing letters (95%)
- Travelling for pleasure (94%)
- Watching PBS, Knowledge Network, educational TV (94%)

The smallest number of participants reported (see Table 5):

- Taking correspondence courses (3%)
- Running or jogging (5%)
- Being part of a theatre or drama group (8%)
- Repairing cars (13%)
- Woodworking (14%)
- Attending counselling or therapy (14%)
- Using a computer (15%)
- Bowling (17%)
- Writing books, stories or poetry (19%)
- Bicycling (19%)

How often did these older adults participate in these activities? Based on a range from a low of never (1.00), annually (2.00), quarterly
(3.00), monthly (4.00), weekly (5.00), to a high of daily (6.00), respondents reported that they most frequently engaged in the following learning activities (see Table 5):

Watching news (5.78)
Reading newspapers or magazines (5.77)
Talking with friends or family (5.63)
Listening to radio (5.63)
Walking (5.61)
Watching other than educational TV (5.47)
Observing nature and life (5.32)
Reading books or plays (5.24)
Watching PBS or Knowledge Network or educational TV (5.18)
Reflecting on life events (5.15)

The learning activities respondents participated in least frequently were (see Table 5):

Taking correspondence courses (1.04)
Running or jogging (1.19)
Being part of a theatre or drama group (1.24)
Repairing cars (1.32)
Attending counselling or therapy (1.38)
Woodworking (1.40)
Using a computer (1.50)
Writing books or stories (1.52)
Bicycling (1.57)
Singing or being part of a choral group (1.68)

There was a significant and strong relationship (r=.91, p=.001) between the two measures of participation reviewed in this study: percentage participation and frequency of participation in each activity. That is, the activities most older adults engaged in were also those that they participated in most frequently.
TABLE 5

Participation in 71 Learning Activities: Frequency of Participation and Percentage Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAN FREQ.</th>
<th>% PART.</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>LEARNING ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>TALKING WITH FRIENDS FAMILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>READING NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>WATCHING NEWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>LISTENING TO RADIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>WATCHING OTHER TV</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.24</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>READING BOOKS OR PLAYS</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.61</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>WALKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>WRITING LETTERS</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.77</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>TRAVELLING FOR PLEASURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>WATCHING PBS KNOWL NETWORK EDUC TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>OBSERVING NATURE AND LIFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>ATTENDING CONCERTS OR MUSICAL EVENTS</td>
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<td>5.15</td>
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<td>REFLECTING ON LIFE EVENTS</td>
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<td>COOKING OR BAKING</td>
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<td>2.98</td>
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<td>285</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
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<td>MEAN</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
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<td>PART.</td>
<td>PART.</td>
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<td>269</td>
<td>BOWLING</td>
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<td>USING A COMPUTER</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>08</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>BEING PART OF A THEATRE GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>RUNNING OR JOGGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>TAKING CORRESPONDENCE COURSES</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Most Important Learning Activities in Later Life

Which learning activities are most important in the lives of older adults? This question has not yet been addressed in the literature. Respondents in this study were asked to report the ten most important learning activities in their lives. Some respondents did not answer this question, but 241 respondents nominated one or more activities for their personal "top ten". These responses were summed across all activities. Respondents revealed that the ten most important learning activities in their lives were:

- Reading books (48.1%)
- Watching PBS, Knowledge Network or educational TV (46.1%)
- Reading newspapers or magazines (45.6%)
- Travelling (42.3%)
- Talking with family or friends (41.9%)
- Attending community or senior centres (33.2%)
- Watching the news (29.0%)
- Observing nature and life (27.8%)
- Visiting libraries (22.4%)
- Listening to the radio (20.7%)

Table 6 lists the most important learning activities for 241 respondents, ranging from the most frequently reported to the least frequently reported. Of the 71 listed learning activities, only two were not chosen as an important learning activity by at least one respondent: taking correspondence courses and bingo.
TABLE 6
Most Important Learning Activities in Later Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READING BOOKS OR PLAYS</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATCHING PBS, KNOW NET, ED TV</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVELLING</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALKING WITH FRIENDS FAMILY</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDING COMM &amp; SENIORS CENTRES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATCHING NEWS</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBSERVING NATURE AND LIFE</td>
<td>67</td>
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</tr>
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<td>VISITING LIBRARIES</td>
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<td>22.4</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>20.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALKING</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTENDING LECTURES</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOING NEEDLE CRAFT SEWING QUILTS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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Individual Participation in Learning Activities

For this study, a learning activity was defined as any experience during the past year in which adults over the age of 55 reported that learning occurred. Three measures of an individual’s participation in learning activities were calculated from responses to the questionnaire:

1. The number of learning activities engaged in by each respondent.

2. The participation rate for each respondent based upon the frequency of participation across 71 learning activities. This participation rate ranged from a low of never (1.00), annually (2.00), quarterly (3.00), monthly (4.00), weekly (5.00), to a high of daily (6.00).

3. The number of hours per week that each respondent engaged in learning activities.

These measures provided three ways of viewing an older adult’s participation in later life. On average, respondents reported taking part in 35 learning activities during the past year, spanning a range from 2 to 64 activities. The mean rate of participation across all activities revealed that these older adults participated in activities between quarterly and monthly (3.21). On average respondents participated for 14 hours per week in learning activities. These findings are summarized in Table 7.
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<th>STD.DEV.</th>
<th>RANGE</th>
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<td>10.98</td>
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<td>.79</td>
<td>1.6-5.8</td>
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<td>HOURS PER WEEK</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>0-72</td>
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Sociodemographic Variables Influencing Participation

Three measures of participation were analyzed for each respondent in this study: number of learning activities, participation rate and number of hours per week engaged in learning activities.

There were significant but small relationships between the number of activities a respondent participated in and age, education, health, and organizational affiliations (Table 8). These relationships revealed that older adults who participated in a more learning activities were younger, had higher levels of education, were in better self-reported health, and were more likely to belong to a community or professional organization than those reported participating in fewer learning activities. Based on these findings, the hypotheses were accepted which proposed that persons who participated in a greater number of learning activities were younger, better educated, healthier, and had more organizational affiliations. There were significant and moderate correlations between the number of learning activities a respondent engaged in and both the number of reported sponsors and number of reasons for participation (Table 8). That is, respondents reporting participation in a greater number of learning activities also provided a greater number of reasons for participating in these learning activities and used a larger number of sponsors to support their learning activities. The hypothesis was accepted which proposed that older
adults reporting greater participation would also report more reasons for participation.

Because of insignificant correlations, the hypotheses were rejected which proposed that older adults who participated in a greater number of learning activities would report greater life satisfaction, be more likely to report living with someone else, and, have a confidant.

There were significant but small relationships between participation rate, gender, and income. This revealed that as an individual's participation rate increased, respondents were more likely to be female, and counter-intuitively, to have lower incomes. Based upon these findings the hypothesis was rejected which proposed that there were no differences in rates of participation based on gender. That is, women reported higher rates of participation than did men. Additionally, the hypothesis was rejected which proposed that older adults with higher rate of participation would also have higher incomes. In this study, older adults with greater participation rates were more likely to report lower incomes. It must be noted, however, that 37% of respondents did not choose to answer the income question.

There were no significant relationships between the number of hours per week an individual engaged in learning activities and any of the sociodemographic variables measured in this study.
TABLE 8

Correlations between Measures of Participation and Selected Sociodemographic Factors

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<tr>
<th>PARTICIPATION MEASURE</th>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
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<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>NUMBER OF REASONS</td>
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<td>NUMBER OF SPONSORS</td>
<td>.43**</td>
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<td>PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
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</table>

* Indicates significance at the .01 level
** Indicates significance at the .001 level
Changes in Participation Since Age Forty

Respondents were asked to report any changes in their participation in each of 71 learning activities since age 40. Possible rates of change ranged from taking part more than when forty (3.00), through taking part about the same as when forty (2.00), to taking part less than when forty (1.00). The average reported rates of change in participation in each of the 71 learning activities are presented in Table 9. The activities that respondents reported taking part in "more than when 40" were:

- Attending community and senior centres
- Watching PBS, Knowledge Network and educational TV
- Reflecting on life events
- Learning about health and nutrition
- Observing nature and life
- Dieting and watching weight
- Reducing stress levels
- Doing volunteer work
- Watching news
- Discussing with grandchildren
- Walking
- Travelling for pleasure
- Reading newspapers or magazines
- Watching other than educational TV

The activities respondents reported engaging in "less than when 40" were:

- Learning for a job
- Hunting, fishing, hiking and camping
- Taking correspondence courses
- Taking part in a professional group
- Dancing
- Caring for a pet
- Running and jogging
- Bicycling
- Bowling
A change index was calculated for each respondent. The mean change index across all respondents was 2.10 demonstrating that, on average, respondents participated in learning activities at about the same frequency as when they were 40.

On an activity by activity basis, however, there was a restructuring of learning activity choices. There were activities that respondents participated in more than when they were forty, about the same as when forty, and less than when forty (see Table 9).

Respondents who participated in learning activities "More than when 40" were more likely to be in better health ($r=.23$, $p=.001$) and to have greater current rates of participation in learning activities ($r=.38$, $p=.001$). There was no significant relationship, however, between an individual’s change index and either the age ($r=-.11$, $p>.01$) or gender of respondent ($r=-.12$, $p>.01$). Based upon these results, the hypotheses were accepted which proposed that there were no significant differences in changes in participation since the age of forty based on either the age or gender of respondents.
### TABLE 9

**Changes in Participation in Learning Activities Since Age Forty**

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<th>RATE OF CHANGE</th>
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Table 9 continued

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<td>211</td>
<td>HUNTING FISHING HIKING CAMPING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 1.57</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>LEARNING FOR A JOB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The rate of change ranges from a possible high of 3.00 indicating taking part "more than when 40" to a low of 1.00 indicating participating "less than when 40". A score of 2.0 indicates participation "about the same" as when 40 years of age".
Organizational Choices Made by Older Adults

The sponsorship and organization of learning activities has a potential for influencing participation. Four organizational choices made by older adults were measured in this study: sponsoring agency, preferred time of day for participation, participation in activities alone or in groups, and participation in age-segregated or age-integrated settings.

Sponsoring Agencies

Several authors noted the importance of community agencies and organizations in providing learning opportunities for older learners. Consistent with these observations, respondents in this study reported that senior centres were the most important sponsors of their learning activities (Table 10). The five most frequently reported sponsors of learning activities for these respondents were:

- Senior centres (70.0%)
- Media, television or radio (62%)
- Oneself (46%)
- Churches (29%)
- Schools, universities or colleges (28%)

Based upon these findings, the hypothesis was accepted which stated that the most important sponsors of learning activities in later life are nonformal and informal and not formal educational institutions.

There were significant relationships between several sponsorship choices and sociodemographic variables measured in this study (Table 11):
1. Senior Centres. Respondents reporting that senior centres were important sponsors of learning activities were more likely to be female, older and living alone. They were also more likely to have lower incomes, to be less educated, and to report belonging to a community or professional organization than did respondents who did not report the senior centre as an important sponsor.

2. Media: Television and Radio. Respondents who reported that the media, television and radio were important sponsors of learning activities were younger and had higher levels of completed education than older adults who did not report the media to be an important sponsor of learning activities.

3. Self-direction. Respondents who reported themselves as an important sponsor of learning activities were younger, more educated, and reported being in better health than older adults who did not report that self as an important sponsor.

4. Church. Respondents who indicated that church was an important sponsor of learning activities more often reported living with someone and belonging to a community or professional organization than those who did not report church as an important sponsor.

5. Schools, Universities and Colleges. Those who reported that schools, universities, and colleges were important sponsors of learning activities had higher education levels, greater incomes and better reported health than those who did not report schools, universities and colleges were an important sponsor of learning activities.
6. Self-Help Groups. Respondents who reported that self-help groups were an important sponsor of learning activities were more likely to live with someone else than those who did not report self-help groups as an important sponsor of learning activities.

7. Business. Respondents who indicated that business was an important sponsor of learning activities were more often male than those who did not indicate that business was an important sponsor of learning activities. Only 7% of respondents, however, reported that business was an important sponsor of learning activities.

Do older adults take part in learning activities only through one agency, or, do they use varied agencies to support learning in their later years? No studies were located that addressed the number of sponsors for learning activities in later life. Respondents in this study were asked to indicate all the important sponsors for learning activities in their lives. For this study a response of "Self" was considered to be a reflection of self-direction and a sponsoring agency for learning activities. On average, respondents reported using three different sponsoring agencies to enhance their learning activities. Respondents who reported using more sponsoring agencies were younger, better educated, lived with some else, had better reported health, took part in a greater number of learning activities and were more likely to belong to a community or professional organization than those who reported using fewer sponsoring agencies.
### TABLE 10

**Sponsorship of Learning Activities in Later Life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE RESPONSE (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Centres</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, TV &amp; Radio</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneself</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools, Univ, College</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Agencies</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Help Group</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Industry</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Percentages totalled more than 100% since respondents were asked to indicate ALL important sponsors of learning activities in their lives.
### TABLE 11

*Correlations between Sponsorship Choices and Sociodemographic Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSORSHIP</th>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR CENTRE</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENT</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA/TV/RADIO</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-DIRECTED</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH</td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENT</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOLS/UNIV/ COLLEGES</td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-HELP GROUP</td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENT</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS</td>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) * Indicates significance at the .01 level.
** Indicates significance at the .001 level.
TABLE 12

Correlations between Number of Sponsors and Sociodemographic Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENT</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) * indicates significance at the .01 level
    ** indicates significance at the .001 level
Preferred Time of Day for Participation

A majority of respondents in this study participated in "out of home" learning activities primarily in the daytime (56%) while 35% reported taking part in learning activities both during the day and at night. There was a significant but small relationship between age and time of day of participation in learning activities ($r = -0.20, p = 0.001$). That is, those who participated in learning activities mainly in the daytime were older. Based upon this finding the hypothesis was accepted which stated that older seniors choose to participate in learning activities primarily in the daytime.

Participation Alone or in Groups

Of the 295 responding to this question, nearly 48% reported participating in learning activities "primarily in a group", while only 14% indicated participating "primarily alone". The remaining 38% reported taking part in learning activities about equally alone or with a group (Table 13). There were significant but small correlations between participation in learning activities alone or in groups and age ($r = 0.18, p = 0.01$), gender ($r = -0.17, p = 0.01$), education ($r = -0.25, p = 0.001$), presence of a confidant ($r = 0.17, p = 0.01$), and organizational affiliations ($r = 0.29, p = 0.001$). Thus, persons who participated in learning activities primarily in groups were older, more likely female, had less previous education, and were more likely to have a confidant and organizational affiliations. Based upon these findings, the hypothesis was rejected
which stated that older seniors are more likely to participate in learning activities alone.

**Participation in Age-Integrated and Age-Segregated Learning Activities**

Several recent studies investigated whether older adults participated in learning activities primarily with their own age group (age-segregated) or with varied ages (age-integrated). Nearly 40% of respondents in this study reported participating in learning activities that were age-segregated; 21.1% reported participating equally in age-segregated and age-integrated activities; 26.8% reported participating primarily in age-integrated activities; 12.3% did not answer the question (Table 13).

There was no significant relationship between age and integration versus segregation preferences ($r=-.14$, $p>.01$). Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected which stated that the older seniors prefer to participate in primarily age-segregated activities. Although the greatest percentage of respondents preferred to participate in age-segregated activities (39.8%), age was not a significant factor in this choice. There were, however, significant but small correlations between integration versus segregation preferences and education ($r=.23$, $p=.001$), and organizational affiliations ($r=-.15$, $p=.01$). Persons who participated in age-integrated learning activities had completed more education and had less organizational affiliation than those who participated in age-segregated learning activities.
TABLE 13
Organizational Choices Made by Older Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE &amp; VALUES</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIME OF DAY OF PARTICIPATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornings or Afternoons</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornings Only</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoons Only</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning/Afternoon or Night</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights Only</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPATION ALONE OR IN GROUPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually in a Group</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Alone &amp; Group</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually Alone</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE-SEGREGATED AND AGE INTEGRATED PREFERENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually Age-Segregated</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Age-Seg &amp; Age-Int</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually Age-Integrated</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for Participation in Learning Activities

Because of the voluntary nature of adult education, Boshier (1985) contended that it was important for educators to know what motivated people to participate. The three most important reasons for participation reported by respondents in this study were: "To keep my mind alive", "Gaining knowledge or skill", and "Meeting or being with friends". The three reasons for participation least reported by this group of adults were: "For job or work", "Because someone else recommended it", and "To escape from boredom" (Table 14).

There were small significant relationships between several reasons for participation and sociodemographic variables measured in this study (Table 15):

1. Respondents who reported that meeting friends was an important reason for participation were more likely to be female and to report belonging to a community or professional organization than those that did not indicate this as a reason.

2. Those who revealed that personal development as an important reason for participating in learning activities were younger than those who did not report this as an important reason for their participation.

3. Respondents who disclosed that community service was an important reason for participation were more likely to be in better health than those who did not indicate this as an important reason for participation.
4. Respondents who indicated that they participated as a break from routine tended to have less positive self-reports of life satisfaction than those who did not indicate this was an important reason for participation.

5. Those who reported that escaping boredom was an important reason for their participation in learning activities tended to live alone and to report poorer health than those who did not indicate this as an important reason for their participation.

6. Those who revealed that job or business was an important reason for their participation in learning activities tended to live with someone else more than those who did not report this as an important reason for participation. Because job or business was an important reason for participation for only 7% of the respondents, the significance of this relationship must be viewed with caution.

Thornton & Collins (1986) reasoned that older adults leading successful lives would participate in more leisure and physical activities and would also be able to give more reasons for participation in these activities. Respondents in this current study, on average, reported some 5.70 reasons for participation in learning activities, ranging from a low of "1" to a high of "13" reasons. Older adults reporting greater participation also reported more reasons for participating in these activities. There was a moderate and significant relationship ($r=.31$, $p=.001$) between the number of learning activities
and the number of reasons for participating in these activities. Based upon these results, the hypothesis was accepted which proposed that as participation in learning activities increased the number or reported reasons for participation also increased. There were significant but small relationships between the number of reported reasons for participation and both age ($r=-.15$, $p=.001$) and belonging to a community or professional organization ($r=.18$, $p=.01$). As the number of reported reasons for participation increased the age of respondents decreased and belonging to a community or professional organization increased.
Table 14

Reasons for Participation in Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON FOR PARTICIPATION</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO KEEP MY MIND ALIVE</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAINING KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEETING OR BEING WITH FRIENDS</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR RELAXATION</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR HEALTH</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR THE COMMUNITY</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS A BREAK FROM ROUTINE</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ESCAPE FROM BOREDOM</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE RECOMMENDED IT</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR JOB OR WORK</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Percentages totalled more than 100.0% since respondents were asked to indicate ALL of the important reasons for their participation.
TABLE 15

Correlation between Reasons for Participation and Sociodemographic Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEETING FRIENDS</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY SERVICE</td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK FROM ROUTINE</td>
<td>LIFE SATISFACTION</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ESCAPE BOREDOM</td>
<td>LIVES ALONE OR WITH OTHERS</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB/BUSINESS</td>
<td>LIVES ALONE OR WITH OTHERS</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates significance at the .01 level.
** Indicates significance at the .001 level.
Barriers to Participation in Learning Activities

Cross (1981) reported that situational, institutional and dispositional barriers often impeded participation in educational activities. Along the same lines, Price & Lyon (1982) concluded that barriers to participation were important factors in determining enrollment in educational activities. Respondents in this study were asked to report major barriers to participation in learning activities. Results revealed that the five most frequently reported barriers were "Being too busy", "Transportation", "Money", "Location of the activity" and "Health problems". The least reported barriers to participation were "Registration procedures", "Would feel uncomfortable", and "Being too old" (Table 16).

Several sociodemographic variables measured in this study had small but significant relationships with selected barriers to participation (Table 17):

1. Too Busy. Persons indicating that being too busy was an important barrier to further participation in learning activities were younger, were more likely to live with someone else, had higher incomes and education levels, and reported being more satisfied with their lives and in better health.

2. Transportation. Respondents who reported that transportation was an important barrier to further participation in learning activities had lower incomes and were more likely to live alone.
3. Money. Those who revealed that money was an important barrier to participation in learning activities were more likely to be female, to live alone and to have lower incomes.

4. Location of Activity. Respondents who disclosed that the location of an activity was a barrier to their participation had higher completed levels of education.

5. Health. Respondents who reported that health was an important barrier to participation in learning activities had lower educational levels, poorer self-reported health status and lower life satisfaction.

6. No One to Go With. Those who disclosed that having no one to go with was an important barrier to participation in learning activities were more likely to be female, had lower incomes, were more likely to live alone, less likely to have a confidant, and more likely to self-report poorer health and lower life satisfaction.

7. Lack of Interest. Those who reported that lack of interest was a major barrier to participation in learning activities were more likely to be males.

8. Seeing and Hearing. Those who revealed that sight and hearing problems were important barriers to participation were more likely to self-report being in poorer health.

9. No Value. Respondents who reported that there was no value in participation were less likely to report belonging to a community or professional organization.
10. Family Responsibilities. Those who reported that family responsibilities were an important barrier to participation in learning activities were more likely to live with someone else.

11. Too Old. Those who reported that being too old was an important barrier to their participation were, in fact, older.

It seemed reasonable to suggest that persons with low levels of participation in learning activities would also report more barriers to participation than would older adults with higher levels of participation. The respondents in this study reported, an average of 2.32 current barriers to participation, ranging from a low of "1" to a high of "10" barriers. There was, however, no significant correlation between number of reported learning activities and the total reported number of barriers to participation. Based upon these findings the hypothesis was rejected which stated that as participation in learning activities decreased the reported number of barriers to participation increased.

There were several small but significant relationships between reported number of barriers to participation and sociodemographic variables. Persons reporting a greater number of barriers to participation had lower income (r=-.25, p=.001), were more likely to live alone (r=-.16, p=.01), and self-report poorer health status (r=-.17, p=.01) and lower life satisfaction (-.17, p=.01).
Table 16

Barriers to Participation in Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGES (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOO BUSY</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION OF THE ACTIVITY</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH PROBLEMS</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO ONE TO GO WITH</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME ACTIVITY OFFERED</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER REASONS</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF INTEREST</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEEING &amp; HEARING PROBLEMS</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO VALUE FOR ME</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOO OLD</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOULD FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGISTRATION PROCEDURES</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Percentages add up to more than 100.0%
Respondents were asked to indicate all important barriers to participation in their lives.
TABLE 17
Correlations between Barriers to Participation and Sociodemographic Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIER</th>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOO BUSY</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIFE SATISFACTION</td>
<td>.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH STATUS</td>
<td>-.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIFE SATISFACTION</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO ONE TO GO WITH</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH STATUS</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIFE SATISFACTION</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HAVING CONFIDANT</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF INTEREST</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEEING AND HEARING</td>
<td>MARITAL STATUS</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO VALUE</td>
<td>ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEELING TOO OLD</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates significance at the .01 level.
** Indicates significance at the .001 level.
Factor Analysis of 71 Learning Activities

An initial factor analysis with Oblimin Rotation was performed to determine if there were factors which underlay the large number of learning activities measured in this study and which helped explain participation. According to Borg & Gall (1983):

Factor analysis is helpful to the researcher because it provides an empirical basis for reducing the many variables to a few factors. The factors then become manageable data for analysis and interpretation. (p.613)

Respondents in this study did not always answer each question in the study so a pairwise inclusion of all eligible subjects was employed in calculating the factor solution. Factors were extracted and rotated for all variables with eigen values greater than 2.0 in order to reduce from 24 the number of monopole or non-interpretable factors. The last two factor groupings, containing only two unrelated learning activities, were not retained for analysis. Thirteen factors were retained for further examination and names for factor group were chosen to describe the common themes among variables underlying each cluster (Table 19). The names for all thirteen factor groups require further analysis and are a first approximation of the substance of these groups. These thirteen factors accounted for 47.8% of the variance in participation.

This factor analysis represents a preliminary review of the data and will be further developed in subsequent analysis. A discussion of factors is developed in Chapter VI.
Table 18

Factor Analysis of 71 Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER NAME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Volunteer</td>
<td>Working on committees</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working on community programs</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing other volunteer work</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending lectures</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking part in political events</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>(10.1 pct of var)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recreation</td>
<td>Playing bingo</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching Other TV</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending legion activities</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing cards, chess, checkers</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Going to community centres</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing Crosswords, jigsaw puzzles</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.1 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Home Life</td>
<td>Woodworking, Carpentry</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repairing cars</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repairing &amp; Home Maintenance</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing needlecraft, sewing</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking &amp; Baking</td>
<td>-.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.8 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self Development</td>
<td>Listening to the radio</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visiting museums &amp; Galleries</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending plays &amp; theatres</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golfing</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending counselling</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing with doctors</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing with health workers</td>
<td>-.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being in a self help group</td>
<td>-.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.8 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spiritual</td>
<td>Playing musical instrument</td>
<td>-.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment</td>
<td>Singing part of choral group</td>
<td>-.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovering spiritual being</td>
<td>-.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovering spiritual being</td>
<td>-.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending religious activities</td>
<td>-.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working in church group</td>
<td>-.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.6 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wellness</td>
<td>Reducing stress levels</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn about health/nutrition</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dieting &amp; watching weight</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercise, aerobics, keep fit</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning to manage money</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.0 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

111
Table 18 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER NAME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Language Arts</td>
<td>Writing books, plays poetry</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning a language</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using a computer</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing autobiography/journal</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Running &amp; jogging</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.9 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Crafts</td>
<td>Tai chi, yoga, meditation</td>
<td>-.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing decorative crafts</td>
<td>-.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking interest courses</td>
<td>-.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing, painting sketching</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking hobby courses</td>
<td>-.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.8 pct var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Leisure</td>
<td>Attending musical events</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending counselling/therapy</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending plays &amp; theatre</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching the news</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking with family &amp; friends</td>
<td>-.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing with grandchildren</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.6 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Expressive</td>
<td>Being part of a theatre group</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking part professional group</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to records &amp; tapes</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling for pleasure</td>
<td>-.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking correspondence courses</td>
<td>-.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.4 pct var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Outdoors/ Nature</td>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring for a pet</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>-.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting, fishing camping</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.3 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hobbies</td>
<td>Doing crossword/jigsaw puzzle</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing needlecraft</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing decorative crafts</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing a musical instrument</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>-.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.2 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Reflection/ Reading</td>
<td>Reading newspapers &amp; magazines</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflecting on life events</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing nature &amp; life</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reading books &amp; plays</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visiting libraries</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.1 pct of var)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* pct of var = percentage of variance
CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS OF FIELD NOTES

Results from questionnaire data provided information for a quantitative level of analysis. Important insights were also collected from discussions with older adults, community centre administrators and housing representatives using the questionnaire to guide discussion. These insights have been thematically summarized in the following sections:

Gender Issues

Older adults, senior centre administrators, and housing representative expressed concern about how difficult it was to foster male participation in activities. They disclosed that females were willing participants but that efforts to encourage male participation had not succeeded beyond "increased membership in snooker or cribbage." One housing administrator commented that "the men in the building just sit in the lobby and watch the paint dry."

Program administrators expressed interest in discovering effective methods for increasing male participation. These administrators also recognized the value of collaborating with other facilities to develop new programs relevant to older males but had not, as yet, been involved in collaborative efforts.
While non-participation was discussed as a male issue, widowhood, financial insecurity, and family responsibility were discussed as important issues affecting the participation of older women. Several women disclosed how difficult it was to make an initial effort to initiate change after widowhood. One woman commented, "After my husband died I was scared to go to the centre. If my neighbor hadn't come with me, I would never have come. Now, I come to the centre three or four times a week to be with people, to learn about new things and to help out." Other older women commented that taking part in senior centre activities assisted them in restructuring their lifestyles following the death of a spouse.

Several women expressed concern about their capabilities in handling financial matters after widowhood. They commented that they were never given any financial responsibilities during their marriages. After being widowed they realized the need to develop financial competence. One woman disclosed that, although she was interested in learning more about handling her finances, she feared "feeling stupid" if men were either teachers or participants in financial management programs.

Another female issue revolved around responsibility for others, especially retired spouses. Several women commented that their spouses did not want them to go out to learn new things. One of these women remarked that she was expected "to have lunch ready at noon, dinner ready at six, and to be around for the rest of the day." Another women
Two issues surfaced concerning the relationship between health and participation: the significance of health as an important barrier to participation and the successful adaptations many older adults make to surmount health barriers.

Many seniors discussed significant health problems which affected both the level and type of their participation. One woman, nearly blind from diabetes, could no longer read and was frustrated how many learning activities required adequate vision. Others commented on the crippling effects of arthritis in their lives or on the devastating deterioration they witnessed from Alzheimer’s Disease.

Alternatively, numerous seniors revealed a tenacious spirit which kept them going, despite physical decline. Several respondents were handicapped by physical constraints but showed a remarkable desire to surmount these barriers. Some of these seniors moved from family homes into more physically supportive environments. After this move, they were able to walk to community activities and were no longer isolated from social supports. They remarked on the significance of supportive environments in their attempts to create independent
lifestyles. Several older seniors commented on the importance of accessible public transportation for attending learning activities and other community events.

Necessity for Keeping Your Mind Alive

One older man remarked, "I just have to keep going, or else, that's when I'll die, in my head." Many older adults commented on the importance of keeping their minds alive. They expressed the "use it or loose it" sentiment about their participation in learning activities and often remarked that the initial commitment to become involved was the most difficult step towards participation in any activity. Seniors expressed an interest in keeping abreast of world events and in learning new things they had never tried before. "Sometimes," one women said, "I need something new and exciting to get me going." Respondents also suggested the need for activities to "help keep our memories sharp."

Importance of the Senior Centre

Many respondents emphasized the importance of the senior centre in their lives. The centre was not only a place for social contact, but also a place where they felt comfortable and where they could maintain a sense of purpose in their lives. One group of senior board members remarked how much they were learning because of their leadership roles
in the centre. Others related that the senior centre was a health and fitness resource centre, a place for social contact, and a focus for volunteer activities.

Senior as Teacher

The importance of the older adult as teacher became apparent throughout this study. This teaching role was important for the older teacher and also for older adult learners. As teachers, older adults were enthusiastic about their subject areas and were themselves learners attempting to keep ahead of their senior students. One teacher remarked that her advanced calligraphy students were always challenging her creativity and often taught her new techniques. She also disclosed how important this teaching role was in her life. Several older learners remarked that they respected both the knowledge and human qualities of their teachers. One older learner, appearing quite nervous at the beginning of a computer program, remarked that having an older teacher helped to put her at ease.
Volunteer Roles in Later Life

Many respondents were involved in varied volunteer roles through senior centres and community organizations. They expressed the importance of these roles which gave them a sense of purpose and commitment. Volunteer roles often provided structure and meaning for many seniors. One senior remarked that his volunteer involvement gave him "an important job to do every Tuesday and Thursday from ten until noon." He also disclosed that his wife was very pleased to get him out of the house at these times. Some seniors commented that they began as volunteers in their local senior centres and later extended their involvement to include outreach programs in the community. Others commented that they were part of a volunteer social network, a network which replaced pre-retirement work networks.

Leadership Issues

Several staff member commented on the importance of senior leadership in their centres. They emphasized the necessity of senior involvement at every level of program organization. These administrators noted, however, that older adults often needed to develop effective leadership skills to be successful in leadership roles. A few programs had been developed at some centres to assist seniors in developing leadership roles but no regular training programs appeared to
be in place. One administrator reported that the senior board at her centre had become a much more cohesive and effective body after participating in leadership training sessions. She also commented that many women, with no history of community or job roles, needed encouragement and training to be effective leaders in local centres.

Need for Innovative Programming

Older adults expressed their interest in learning new things and at getting involved in more than just traditional programs. One older women commented that "we are capable of more than just sitting and watching slides."

In an articulate letter returned with a completed questionnaire, one women expressed her annoyance at how seniors were often "lectured at". She stated:

While the quality and content of lectures was high, it is the fact of being lectured at, of being rendered a passive consumer with hardly a moments time for a brief question, that I object to....In other words, find the relevance of courses in the varied lives of seniors themselves, and give maximum opportunity for building interaction, networks, and even friendships.

A senior leader at a housing complex commented on the importance of discovering new and innovative ways to market learning activities for older adults. He expressed an interest in receiving guidance from adult educators only if it was "in a language I could understand and useful for complex residents."
Encouraging and Attracting Non-Participants

Both seniors and program administrators expressed concern and uncertainty about attracting non-participants into their programs. Several senior centres had committees organized to welcome new members and to find out if there were members in the community who were unable to attend programs because of finances. One centre in Vancouver recently hired a coordinator to facilitate interaction with seniors who could not get to the centre. Other centres involved volunteers in outreach programs that visited the sick or provided services aimed at giving primary caregivers respite.

Seniors showed an active concern for assisting other seniors in the community who did not attend their centre but also expressed uncertainty about how this could most effectively be accomplished.

Need for Educators to Move into the Community

Respondents expressed the need for educators to move out of the "their ivory towers" and into the community. They often commented that they felt abandoned by educators who never showed up unless they had some questionnaire in their hands. One comment, from the president of a large senior centre captured this issue. He commented:

You educators shouldn’t take forever bringing your ideas to the community, because for some of us, there isn’t a lot of time left. If you (educators) don’t get moving, we’ll just go on learning without you.
Discussions with older adults and program administrators added an important dimension to the quantitative findings presented in Chapter IV. These interviews assisted in developing a firmer foundation on which to base discussions and recommendations for research and practice presented in Chapter VI and VII.
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Major findings, developed from an analysis of 332 questionnaires and a synthesis of interviews with older adults, are reviewed in this chapter. The findings are discussed in conjunction with the literature and with the six research hypotheses presented in Chapter III.

Sampling procedures used in this study must be considered when making broad generalizations from the data. A majority of respondents in this study were members of senior centres. Further research is required to understand participation by older adults who do not attend senior centres or activities sponsored by educational agencies.

Measures of Participation in Learning Activities

A "learning activity" was defined as any experience during the past year in which adults over the age of 55 reported that learning occurred. Each respondent's participation was viewed from three perspectives: the number of learning activities an individual engaged in, a rate of participation representing the average frequency of participation across all learning activities, and the number of hours per week engaged in learning activities.

This current study explored a wider range of formal, non-formal, informal, and self-directed learning activities than currently presented in the literature; this study broadened narrow definitions of
educational activity to "include any learning opportunity provided for or by the older adult" (Courtenay & Long, 1987, p.83). The findings from this study did not corroborate earlier participation studies, focused on traditional educational activities, which concluded that the participation of older adults in learning activities was low (Cross, 1981; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Peterson, 1983; Ventura & Worthy, 1982). Devereaux (1985), for example, had reported that approximately 4% of those 65 and over take part in educational activities and concluded that "adult learners tended to be relatively young" (p. 6).

On average, older adults in this study participated in 35 learning activities for an average of 14 hours per week over the past year (Table 7). Findings from this current study challenge the relevance of low reported rates of participation for older adults. Both the number and the diversity of learning activities reported by older adults in this study underscore the relevance of exploring a wider range of learning activities in future participation research. Formal educational pursuits form only one part of a complex web of predominantly nonformal, informal and self-directed learning activities engaged in by older adults.

Most Important Learning Activities in Later Life

In this section the term "top ten" refers to the ten most frequently reported, important learning activities by older adults: reading books or plays; watching Public Broadcasting System, Knowledge
Network, or other educational TV; reading newspapers or magazines; travelling; talking with family and friends; attending senior centres; watching news; observing nature and life; visiting libraries; and listening to the radio (Table 6).

The top ten most important learning activities (a) demonstrated the heterogeneity of the older population; (b) reflected the significance of sponsoring agencies other than educational institutions; (c) illustrated the importance of nonformal and informal modes of education; and (d) suggested the relevance of developing innovative learning opportunities for later life learners.

The heterogeneity of the older adult population was reflected in reports of most important learning activities. Only two of the 71 listed activities, taking correspondence courses and bowling, were not named as a top ten by at least one respondent (Table 6). This validates recent work by Courtenay (1989) who concluded that "there is no single, generic ultimate purpose of education for older adults" (p. 531). A wide variety of personalities, interests and social contexts must be incorporated into program planning efforts to meet the diverse needs of older learners.

Taking correspondence courses was not named as an important learning activity by any respondents in this study. This finding calls into question the development of distance education for older learners in North America. In Britain, older learners are being admitted in increasing numbers to the Open University, a correspondence program; in
Japan, there is growing support from older learners for correspondence programs broadcast over radio networks. As North American educators, we must reexamine our understanding of and commitment to distance education for the older learner.

The top ten most important learning activities confirmed the relevance of sponsoring agencies outside the formal educational sector. Media sponsorship was a common denominator for three of the top ten important learning activities in later life: watching Public Broadcasting System, Knowledge Network, or other educational TV; watching the news; and, listening to the radio. Davis & Miller (1983) and Glass & Smith (1985) recognized the influence and educative potential of media in later life. Glass & Smith (1985) called television an "educational and outreach potential" (p. 257) but cautioned:

Educators may see a potential in television to meet the educational and service needs of growing numbers of older people, or a technological nightmare that could invade privacy as well as encourage a passive vicarious existence removed from the warmth of real human contact. (p. 257)

After identifying older adults as heavy consumers of information delivered by television, Davis & Miller (1983) observed:

The major preference of the older viewer is for news and public affairs programming. This implies a utility value for television for this audience as an information system, a link to the common pool of knowledge, and as a "window to the world." (p. 217)

In contradiction to these findings which illustrate the educative value of media programming, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has
recently limited support for a programming effort directed towards older adults, The Best Years. This decision is not consistent with either demographic shifts or with the educative potential of television across the life course.

Informal learning networks were the focus of another three of the top ten most important learning activities: talking with family and friends, attending senior centres, and travelling. The importance of these informal networks has recently been reviewed by Brookfield (1984) and Coombs (1985). This suggests the relevance of research to enhance our understanding of supportive networks in later life. Brookfield (1986) considered the functions of informal learning networks and reported:

Major functions of the network identified by participants included the exchange of information, the development of problem solving techniques in concert with others, attitudinal changes among members, the fostering of peer group support, the development of interpersonal communication skills, and the use of connectional thinking in which adults became adept at making quick connections between diverse resources, bodies of knowledge, or problem solving techniques. (p. 151)

Three of the top ten, important learning activities revolved around reading: reading books or plays; reading newspapers or magazines; and, visiting libraries. This suggests not only the value of enhancing the range of available large print and talking books, but also the value of financial commitments for the development and implementation of literacy programs for later life learners. Further research is also
required to evaluate the significance and potentials of the library as an important sponsor of learning activities for older adults.

One important learning activity revolved around activities sponsored by the senior centre. Over 70% of respondents reported that senior centres were an important sponsor of their learning activities. Developing the role of adult educator as a learning consultant in senior centres could prove to be a beneficial symbiotic relationship for both educators and senior centres. Ralston (1981) remarked that the educational component in most senior centres should be strengthened and remarked that "most senior centres were not providing adequately in the 'personal development', 'problems with aging', and 'home and family' areas" (p. 242).

The value of expanding innovative programming for older adults is reflected by another important learning activity in later life: observing nature and life. This, activity along with another frequently reported important learning activity, reflecting on life events, suggests the significance of reminiscence and life review in later life (Butler, 1963, 1980; Ebersole, 1978; Lewis, 1971, Merriam, 1985). Birren & Hedlund (1986) commented that such activities as guided autobiography could become a positive force in later life. Baum (1980) reported on the therapeutic value of oral history and commented:

Oral history provides a way of making concrete one's experiences and wisdom and of creating from them a heritage to hand down to one's family and communal heirs. (p. 49)
Further efforts must be directed towards designing and evaluating innovative learning alternatives that expand development potentials of later life. This was supported by seniors who remarked that they enjoyed trying something new and using new approaches to their hobbies and crafts.

Sociodemographic Measures Influencing Participation

This study suggested a portrait of the older adult as learner across a wide variety of learning activities (Table 8). Older adults reporting the greatest participation were more likely to be younger seniors, female, more educated, and to report lower incomes and better self-reported health. They were also more likely to belong to community or professional associations and to report more reason for and sponsors of their learning activities. There have been consistent reports in the literature about the relationship between greater participation and younger age, more education and greater income. In this study, however, relationships between participation and age, education, and income were much smaller than anticipated. Caution must be exercised in generalizing from participation research focused on traditional adult education activities to broader discussions of learning in later life. Findings from this current study are discussed in the following sections.
Participation and Age

In this current study, participation in a greater number of learning activities was significantly correlated to younger age of participants. The hypothesis was accepted which proposed that younger seniors participated in a greater number of learning activities than did more aged seniors. This hypothesis was, however, accepted on the basis of only a small but significant correlation between the number of learning activities an older adult engaged in and age (r=-.20, p=.001). There were no significant relationships between age and the two other measures of participation calculated in this study: participation rate and number of hours per week engaged in learning activities. Regression statistics demonstrated that participation decreased at a rate of 2.84 activities per decade of advancing age. This decrease does not seem substantial when considering the average number of learning activities an older adult engaged in each year (35).

A relationship between increasing participation and declining age has, however, been consistently supported in the literature (Graney & Hays, 1976; Harris & Associates, 1975; Heisel, 1980; Heisel, Darkenwald & Anderson, 1981). Peterson (1983) stated that age was a significant factor in determining the educational participation of the older adult. Alternatively, the small size of the significant correlation reported in this study challenges the relevance of these reports across a broad spectrum of learning activities. Recent studies have suggested the importance of varied and innovative learning opportunities for the older
adult. Innovative learning activities such as Elderhostel, self-help
groups, and New Horizons are already attracting increasing numbers of
senior participants (Morrow-Howell & Ozawa, 1987; Novak, 1987; O’Donnell
& Berkeley, 1980). This nontraditional participation must be evaluated
before any definitive statements can be made about the relative
importance of the small but significant relationship between decreasing
participation and increasing age.

Participation and Gender

There was a small but significant correlation between
participation rate and gender (r=-.20, p=.001): men participated in
learning activities less frequently than did women. Based upon this
finding, the hypothesis was rejected which stated that there were no
significant differences in participation by the gender of respondent.
This finding supports works by Hooper & March (1978), and Ventura &
Worthy (1982). Means testing indicated that across all activities, on
average, men participated in learning activities almost quarterly
(2.91); women participated in learning activities between quarterly and
monthly (3.30).

Discussions with senior centre administrators corroborated this
finding. They reported how difficult it was to get men to participate
in learning activities; they also asked for support from adult educators
in designing programs relevant for men. Although, demographically,
aging is referred to as a women’s problem, research and program efforts
must concentrate on gender differences in participation across the life course.

**Participation and Income**

There was a small but significant ($r=-.21$, $p=.01$) negative correlation between income and participation rate: as the participation rate increased income decreased. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected which proposed that persons with higher incomes participated more frequently in learning activities. This result can be accounted for by the fact that a majority of the respondents were senior centre members. As noted in the literature review, Krout (1983) demonstrated that as senior centre use increased, the income of participants decreased.

The current study also revealed that participation in specific activities increased as income decreased. As income decreased there were moderate and significant increases in attending senior centres. As income decreased there were significant but small increases in participation in the following learning activities:

- Attending hobby courses
- Doing decorative crafts and ceramics
- Doing needlecraft, sewing, and quilting
- Playing bingo
- Attending self-help groups
- Watching the news

This increase in participation rate with decreasing income is not corroborated in the literature. Current literature supports the hypothesis that increased participation in educational activities is
related to higher income. Heisel (1980), Jarvis (1985), and Marcus (1978) related higher levels of participation in adult education to higher levels of socioeconomic status. Cross (1981) concluded that "adults who were not involved in learning activities were likely to be poorly educated, poorly paid, older rural residents" (p.64).

The counter-intuitive finding in this current study raises some questions. Does income become a less important factor influencing participation when considering a wide variety of nonformal and informal learning activities? Has the previously reported significance of income as an intervening variable been important only when considering participation in more traditional enterprises? Do older adults of lower income have their own repertoire of learning activities that have been ignored in the measurement of traditional, institutionally-based activities? Findings from this study suggest a positive response to these questions. The relevance of this relationship must be reexamined as 37% of respondents did not answer the income question.

Participation and Education

There was a small but significant correlation between the number of learning activities an individual engaged in and education (r=.26, p=.001) which revealed that as completed levels of education increased so did participation. This finding supported the hypothesis which proposed that older adults who participate in a greater number of learning activities have more previous education than those who

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participate in fewer activities. There is considerable support for this finding in the literature (Courtenay & Long, 1987; Covey, 1981; Graney, 1980; Heisel, Darkenwald, & Anderson, 1981; Hooper & March, 1978; Kingston & Drotter, 1983; Peterson, 1983). Courtenay & Long (1987) concluded that previously completed level of education was the most important predictor of participation in learning activities.

The strength of the relationship between education and participation was, however, much smaller than anticipated. Across all 71 learning activities reported in this study, regression statistics revealed that for every increase in educational level there was an increase in participation of only 1.18 learning activities. Older adults with more completed education were more likely to engage in learning activities sponsored by schools, colleges, and universities; media; and themselves. Older adults with less completed education were more likely to participate in activities sponsored by senior centres.

Several questions are suggested about the relationship between previous education and current participation. First, are older adults with more previous education more prepared to search out a wider variety of learning opportunities in varied settings? There was support for this in the current study. There was a small but significant relationship between previous completed education and total number of sponsoring agencies for learning activities ($r=.25, p=.001$). Secondly, do current learning opportunities offered for older adults serve to perpetuate social inequalities developed in the formal education system?
Radcliffe (1982), in reporting on the current provision of educational activities for the elderly, suggested:

It (the growing provision of educational activities for the elderly) has a certain elitist quality, in serving a clientele who are better able than others to articulate their needs and interests. (p. 315)

Participation and Measures of Well-Being

Two aspects of well-being were measured in this current study: life satisfaction and health status. There was no support for the hypothesis which proposed that persons who reported greater life satisfaction would also report greater participation in learning activities. This hypothesis was based upon work of Larson (1978).

The measure of life satisfaction used in this study might be questioned. Respondents were asked to complete only one very general question concerning life satisfaction. The correlation between life satisfaction and the number of learning activities an older adult engaged in was not statistically significant ($r=.14$, $p>.01$). The single general question used in this current study may have been an inadequate measure of a complex concept, life satisfaction. A more detailed scale of well-being, such as one developed by Reker & Wong (1984) might prove a more satisfactory measure for future work. This scale poses several questions related to both physical and mental components of well-being.

There was a significant but small relationship ($r=.17$, $p=.01$) between reported health status and participation in learning activities.
As participation in learning activities increased so did positive self-reports of health status. Means tests revealed seniors who reported "Very poor" health participated in many fewer learning activities (22) than those who reported "Excellent" health (36). Those who reported "Poor" health, however, participated in almost as many learning activities (32) as those who reported "Excellent" health (36). The small size of the correlation between health and participation opens up some important areas for further consideration. Do older adults restructure their learning activity profile by substituting more appropriate learning activities for ones they are no longer able to participate in? There is some support for this in findings from this study. On an activity by activity basis, there were significant but small correlations between declining health and increased participation in two learning activities: discussion with doctors and being in a self-help group.

A second issue revolves around the ability of many seniors to continue participation despite chronic health problems. Several seniors interviewed in this study were in poor health but revealed a tenacity and zest for life. These older adults developed innovative coping strategies which allowed them to continue varied forms of participation despite chronic health problems. They moved to more supportive environments, became involved in new activities which were more suited to their changing situations, and became involved in self-help groups which helped them to cope with health-related problems.
Participation and Social Context

Four measures of an individual's social context were reported in this study: marital status, living arrangement, presence of a confidant, and belonging to a community or professional organization. Marital status was not significantly related to any measures of participation. There was no support for the hypothesis which proposed that older adults who lived with someone or reported having a confidant would report greater participation. A great majority of respondents in this study, however, reported having a confidant (81%). There was, on the other hand, small but significant support for accepting the hypothesis which proposed that older adults who reported greater participation were also more likely to report belonging to a community or professional organization ($r=.16, p=.01$).

Recent works concerning social networks and the presence of a confidant (Antonucci, 1985; Chiraboga, 1987) have indicated the importance of social supports in later life. Chiraboga (1987) reported:

> With the growing recognition of social and physical stressors as disruptive forces in the lives of the elderly, gerontologists have also begun to examine social others as potential mediators and buffers against the impact of stressors. (p. 635)

Issues of social support in later life have received increasing attention in the literature of psychology and sociology but not in adult education literature. More in-depth research will be required to more fully understand the relationship between sensitive measures of social context and participation in learning activities.
Changes in Participation Since Age Forty

Neither findings from the literature nor from this current study provide a longitudinal view of participation across the life course. This current study, however, provides one glimpse into changes in participation across the life span (Table 9). Respondents in this study were asked to report changes in their participation since age forty in each of 71 learning activities. Based upon these reports, an overall change index was calculated for each individual. Response possibilities ranged from "Less than when 40" (1.00), to a midpoint of participation "About the same as when 40" (2.00), to a high of participation "More than when 40" (3.00). The average change index across all participants was 2.1, indicating that for this group of older adults there was little change in an overall participation since the age of forty.

This is corroborated in the work of Peppers (1976) who found that there was a continuity of activity between pre and post retirement years. Although the average change index for respondents in this study remained "About the same" as when forty, there were, however, changes noted in activity choices between age forty and later life. This finding, still congruent with an overall continuity across the life course, points towards a restructuring of learning activities across the
life span. There were several activities that respondents participated in more than when they were 40. The most frequently cited were:

- Attending community or senior centres
- Watching PBS, Knowledge Network or other educational TV
- Reflecting on life events
- Learning about health and nutrition
- Observing nature and life
- Dieting or watching weight
- Reducing stress levels
- Doing volunteer work
- Watching the news
- Discussing with grandchildren
- Walking
- Travelling for pleasure
- Reading book or plays

There were also several activities that they participated in less than when they were forty. The most frequently cited included:

- Learning for a job
- Hunting, fishing or camping
- Taking correspondence courses
- Taking part in a professional group
- Dancing
- Caring for a pet
- Running or jogging
- Bicycling
- Bowling

These findings, inferring a restructuring of activities in later life, are supported in the literature in research by Zuzanek & Box (1988) who concluded that:

It seems that, at least in the case of healthy older adults, advanced age carries with it a gradual and controlled restructuring of older adults’ daily lives rather than a radical withdrawal from, or discontinuation with, activity participation. (p. 180)
Across a wide spectrum of 71 learning activities, older seniors were no more likely than younger seniors to report less participation than when they were forty \( (r=-.11, \ p>.01) \). There was also no significant relationship between gender and self-reports of changes in participation since age forty \( (r=-.12, \ p>.01) \). Two hypotheses were accepted which proposed that there were no significant differences in changes in participation since the age of forty related either to the age or gender of respondents. Participation studies which assume that either age or sex is the most important variable influencing changes in participation across the life course must be seriously questioned.

Alternatively, there was a small but significant relationship between an individual's change index and health \( (r=.23, \ p=.001) \). Respondents reporting better health also reported taking part in more learning activities since they were 40 than did those respondents reporting less satisfactory health. As population aging continues, it will be increasingly important to understand changes in participation related to health status.

Findings from this study point to a continuity across the life course combined with a restructuring of participation on an activity by activity basis. Further longitudinal research is required to verify this life course view of participation.
Organizational Choices Made by Older Adults

When learners choose to participate in learning activities they also make choices which express preferences about the sponsorship and organization of programs. Four choices, related to the sponsorship and organization of learning activities, were reported in this study: sponsorship (Table 10), preferred time of day of participation (Table 13), participation alone or in group settings (Table 13), and participation in age-segregated or age-integrated settings (Table 13).

Sponsorship

The five most frequently reported sponsors of learning activities for older adults in this study were senior centres; media: television and radio; "self"; churches; and, schools, universities and colleges (Table 10). On average, respondents reported using three sponsoring agencies to support their learning activities. These results demonstrated the diversity of sponsors for learning activities in later life and revealed not only the importance of community-based and media programs, but also the importance of oneself as a planner of learning activities in later life.

These findings corroborated work by DeCrow (1975) who explored participation in learning activities in later life sponsored by a wide variety of non-school agencies: libraries, museums, churches, parks and recreation departments, business, and numerous volunteer and community
agencies. The importance of community sponsored learning activities was more recently acknowledged by Ventura & Worthy (1982) who noted that almost one-quarter of older participants who were enrolled in educational programs did so through community or senior centres. Along the same line, Heisel, Darkenwald, & Anderson (1981) reported that:

Age appears to be an important determinant of where the elderly take courses. While the 60-64 group has no single particularly favored location, those 65-69 show a definite preference for community organizations (20.4%), a location that becomes markedly more popular with the oldest learners (36.4%). Those who attend courses given in four-year colleges tend to have college degrees. (p. 237)

This current study demonstrated the importance of the media as a sponsoring agency for learning activities in later life. Several time-budget studies (Altergott, 1988; Zuzanek & Box, 1988) have previously commented that older adults spend increasing amounts of time watching television. Only a few studies, however, were located that considered educative aspects of media programs (Davis & Miller, 1983; Glass & Smith, 1985; Straka, 1987). Glass & Smith (1985) concluded:

Educators and service providers must find the most responsible and the most effective methods for reaching their target audience. If television is among the means considered for reaching the aged, it is worthwhile to examine both the liabilities as well as the benefits before proceeding. (p. 258)

Forty-six percent of respondents in this study reported that "self" was an important current sponsor of learning activities. The importance of self-directed learning activities in later life was established by Tough (1971, 1979) and extended to older adults by Hiemstra (1972, 1985). Brookfield (1984), in an attempt to move past
merely acknowledging self-directed learning as a legitimate focus for adult education, recommended establishing learning networks that support self-directed endeavors. Providing support for these learning networks will assist self-directed learners throughout the life course.

Self-directed learners do not, necessarily, learn without the assistance of external resources or social contact. Effective resources are required to assist seniors who plan their own learning experiences; innovative strategies are essential to increase the self-directed skills of older adults who currently rely on community agencies to plan and organize their activities.

Only 28% of respondents in this present study reported that "schools, universities, or colleges" were important sponsors of their learning activities. Based upon this result, the hypothesis was accepted which proposed that the most important sponsors of learning activities were nonformal and informal and not formal educational institutions. This finding encourages us, as educators, to shift our focus to the community and to recognize the importance of alternatives to institutionally-based programs. Opportunities for adult educators are present in varied nonformal and informal settings: self-help groups, wellness centres, libraries, and media; opportunities are also present for adult educators to enhance the efforts of self-directed learners.
Preferred Time of Day for Participation

A majority of respondents (56.3%) report engaging in "out of home" learning activities primarily in the daytime (Table 13). There was a small but significant correlation which revealed that older seniors choose to participate in learning activities in the daytime. This is consistent with findings by Peterson (1983) who concluded:

Instructional programs for older people are generally preferred in the daytime, and scheduling courses in the evenings or on weekends may prove detrimental to enrollment. (p.283)

The location and time of an activity can often become barriers to participation for older adults (Cross, 1981). Several respondents in this study lived in the city core and remarked that they feared going out of their homes after dark. Program planners targeting the senior population must be sensitive to environmental influences on participation and continue to explore alternatives for developing the most supportive scheduling and location of activities.

Participation Alone or in Group Settings

Over 48% of respondents in this study reported taking part in learning activities in a group. There was a small but significant relationship which revealed that older seniors were more likely to participate in learning activities in groups than were younger seniors. Based upon this result, the hypothesis was rejected which proposed that older seniors preferred to participate in learning activities alone rather than in group settings.
In the literature, two conflicting pictures have emerged concerning social participation in later life. A disengagement view of aging (Cumming & Henry, 1961) implied that as people age they retreated into a more isolated world. This produces a portrait of aging adults retreating towards more solitary types of learning activities. Romaniuk & Romaniuk (1982) and Sprouse (1981), however, noted the importance of social reasons for taking part in learning activities in later life.

Findings from this current study corroborated research which challenged the relevance of disengagement theory for many older adults. In this study, the third most frequently reported reason for participating in learning activities was "to meet or be with friends". Along the same lines, two of the top ten most frequently reported important learning activities were social in nature: talking with family and friends and attending senior centres. These findings complement the group orientation reported by many older learners. Opportunities which support group-oriented activities are already attracting greater numbers of older adult participants: Elderhostel, self-help groups, wellness projects.

Participation in Age-Segregated and Age-Integrated Settings

Over 45% of respondents in this current study reported engaging in age-segregated learning activities (Table 13). Of the remaining respondents, 21.1% participated equally in age-segregated and age-integrated activities and 26.8% reported participation usually in age-
integrated activities. Although the greatest percentage of respondents preferred to participate in age-segregated activities, there was, however, no significant relationship between age and preference for age-segregated or age-integrated activities.

To date, research about participation in age-integrated versus age-segregated learning activities has produced some contradictory results. Research suggested the importance of age-integrated activities for some older adults (Covey, 1981; Hooper & March, 1978). On the other hand, Peterson & Orgren (1982) noted that older adults preferred to participate with members of their own age group. Sprouse (1981) reported that age-integrated courses were likely to attract those who were younger, better educated and more affluent, while those at the opposite end of the socioeconomic spectrum were more attracted to community based age-segregated activities. In this current study, older adults with more previous education were more likely to report participation in age-integrated activities \((r=.23, p=.001)\) than were respondents with less previous education.

The importance of both age-segregated and age-integrated opportunities requires further exploration. Increased intergenerational conflict between the elderly and younger generations is possible as more economic support must go towards a rapidly growing aging population. Younger generations will need to be educated about the realities of aging in society; older adults will need to learn to communicate effectively with younger generations. Thus, it is important for social
planners and adult educators to develop opportunities for intergenerational programs. The importance of age-segregated programs, however, must not be minimized. The entire question surrounding the issue of age-segregated versus age-integrated learning activities needs to be reframed. The question is not either age-segregated or age-integrated activities; the questions become: "When are age-segregated opportunities most appropriate?" "When are age-integrated activities most appropriate?"

Reasons for Participation

The most frequently reported reasons for participation in this current study were growth and socially-oriented rather than deficiency-oriented: "Keeping one's mind alive", "Gaining knowledge or skills", "Meeting or being with friends", "Personal Development", and "Entertainment" (Table 14). The least reported reasons for participation suggested deficiency-oriented factors from the popular Education Participation Scale developed by Boshier (1977, 1985): "Because someone else recommended it", "To escape boredom", and "As a break from routine". Boshier & Collins (1983) have reported that, when using the Education Participation Scale, older adults were most often enrolled for reasons of cognitive interest, that is, for learning for its own sake. Only three of the six factor groups from the Education Participation Scale were of major importance to respondents in this
study: Cognitive Interest, Social Contact, and Community Service; three of the six factor groups were of very limited importance to this group: Professional Advancement, External Expectations, and Social Stimulation (escape boredom). The Education Participation Scale does not appear to provide sufficient choices that reflect the growth-oriented motivations of older adults across nonformal and informal learning activities. Boshier & Riddell (1978) acknowledged that the Education Participation Scale "was originally developed to measure the motives of participants who are usually middle-class and enrolled in 'traditional' adult education situations" (p.170). Additional research is necessary to validate motivational orientations for the contemporary cohort of older adults across a broad spectrum of learning activities.

On average, respondents reported having over five important reasons for participating in learning activities. Multiple and diverse reasons for participation in learning activities in later life have also been reported in the literature (Fisher, 1986; Heisel, Darkenwald, & Anderson, 1981; Kingston, 1982; Romaniuk & Romaniuk 1982).

In this study, as the number of reported reasons for participation increased the number of learning activities an older adult engaged in also increased. Based upon this result, the hypothesis was accepted which proposed that as participation increased so did the number of reasons for participation (r=.31, p=.001). This finding supports the work of Thornton & Collins (1986) who concluded that adults who age
successfully are able to give more reasons for participation in learning activities and participate in more activities.

One explanation for this relationship lies in dynamic forces encouraging or discouraging participation throughout the life course. Reasons for participation are part of a complex web of socioeconomic, personal, and political forces (Miller, 1967) shaping participation. The more reasons a respondent gives for participation, the greater value participation has for them and the more positive are the forces encouraging participation. Older adults with fewer compelling forces encouraging participation are less motivated to participate and report fewer compelling reasons for participation. This understanding requires the development of effective strategies for increasing positive forces for participation and for decreasing the negative forces which limit participation for learners in later life.

There were small but significant relationships between reasons for participation and both age and reports of belonging to a community or professional organization (Table 15). Respondents who reported more reasons for participation were younger and more likely to report belonging to a community or professional organization than those who reported fewer reasons. Organizational affiliations are part of a supportive network that encourages older adults to continue to be lifelong learners. Opportunities for lifelong organizational affiliation provided by such groups as the British Columbia Telephone
Barriers to Participation

The most frequently reported barriers to participation were "Being too busy", "Transportation", "Money", "Location of the activity", and, "Health" (Table 16). Most of these barriers have been extensively reviewed in the literature (Fishtein & Feier, 1982; Goodrow, 1975; Graney & Hays, 1976; Kingston, 1982; Kingston & Drotter, 1983; March, Hooper & Baum, 1977; Marcus, 1978; Price & Lyon, 1982; Ventura & Worthy, 1982). The most important barrier in this study, "Being too busy", has not, however, received adequate attention in the literature. Today, many older adults lead full and active lives. As educators, we must shift our focus from consideration of a passive clientele to providing relevant experiences for many active older adults leading busy and full lives. Program planning for older adults requires thoughtful decision making which must be carried out in collaboration with the older learner.

On average, respondents reported two barriers to their participation in learning activities. One hypothesis in this study proposed that as the number of reported barriers increased, the number of learning activities would decrease. This was not, however, supported in the findings. There was no significant relationship between the...
total number of reported barriers and any measures of participation. It seems logical to propose that one strong barriers, such as very poor health, would be a more significant barrier to participation than two or three less influential barriers.

Factor Analysis of 71 Learning Activities

Learning activities were factor analyzed to determine if there were underlying factors which could help explain participation across a wide spectrum of learning activities (Table 18). This initial rotation suggested 13 factors underlying the 71 learning activities which explained 48% of the variance in participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR 1</th>
<th>Volunteer Involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 2</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FACTOR 3</td>
<td>Home Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 4</td>
<td>Self Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 5</td>
<td>Spiritual Enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 6</td>
<td>Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 7</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 8</td>
<td>Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 9</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 10</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 11</td>
<td>Outdoors/Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 12</td>
<td>Hobbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR 13</td>
<td>Reflection/Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These factor groups suggested orientations in the literature proposed by Houle's (1961), Boshier (1985b) and Londoner (1985); they also reflected broad themes of participation synthesized by Ventura & Worthy (1982). Factor groups in this study do not represent mutually exclusive categories from these four typologies. Each factor group in
this study may contain, for example, elements of both Expressive and Instrumental orientations, or, reflect a combination of Social Contact, Cognitive Interest, and Community Service motivations. For this current discussion, however, factors were forced into only one, or at most two, orientations for each typology represented.

Factors groups were divided about equally among three motivational categories proposed by Houle (1961): 3.5 factors reflected goal orientations, 4.5 reflected learning orientations and 4 factors reflected activity orientations. The factor groups also reflected Londoner's (1985) discussions of instrumental and expressive learning orientations: nine factors suggested expressive activities, four factors suggested instrumental activities. In contrast to Londoner's (1985) discussion, however, the factor clusters for this study fall primarily in the expressive rather than the instrumental arena.

Based upon a synthesis of relevant research, Ventura & Worthy (1982) suggested two broad themes that underlay reasons for participation in learning activities in later life: (a) a continued sense of meaning in life, and (b) a sense of control or coping. In this current study, ten factors suggested a sense of meaning and three factor groupings suggested gaining a sense of control or coping in life.

Attempts to relate factor groupings from this study to Boshier's motivational categories (Boshier, 1985) were difficult because a large majority of factor groups suggested in this current study reflected the category of Cognitive Interest from Boshier's Education Participation
Scale. This confirms work by Boshier & Collins (1983) who noted that "older adults...were more inclined to be enrolled for Cognitive Interest - learning for its own sake" (p. 172). Based on the preliminary factor analysis carried out in this study, factor clusters did not suggest three motivational categories from the popular Educational Participation Scale: Professional Advancement, Social Stimulation (Escape), and External Expectations.

This analysis suggests the importance of programming for multiple learning orientations throughout the life course: goal, activity, and learning orientations (Houle, 1961). It also points towards (a) the importance of growth orientations in later life; and, (b) the need for expressive activities that provide meaning in later life. That is, factor clusters suggest the importance of expressive activities that provide a sense of meaning for later life learners. This overall growth orientation was congruent with the growth-oriented motivations expressed by respondents in this study (Table 14). The relationships between factor clusters from this study and orientations to learning suggested by Houle (1961), Boshier (1985b), Londoner (1985), and Ventura & Worthy (1982) are illustrated in Table 19. Additional research is required to increase our knowledge of several factor groups from this study that are only beginning to capture the attention of adult educators: Volunteer Involvement, Self Development in later life, Spiritual Enrichment, Wellness, and Reflection/Reading.
Table 19

Relationship between Learning Activity Factor Groups and Four Orientations to Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER NAME</th>
<th>ORIENTATIONS TO ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
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<td>HOULE 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Volunteer Involvement</td>
<td>Goal Com.Service Instrumental Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recreation</td>
<td>Activity Soc.Contact Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Home Life</td>
<td>Goal Instrumental Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self Development</td>
<td>Goal Cog.Interest Instrumental Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spiritual Enrichment</td>
<td>Learning Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wellness</td>
<td>Goal Learning Cog.Interest Instrumental Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Language Arts</td>
<td>Learning Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Crafts</td>
<td>Activity Learning Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Expressive</td>
<td>Activity Learning Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Outdoors/</td>
<td>Activity Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hobbies</td>
<td>Activity Cog.Interest Expressive Meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Com.Service=Community Service Soc.Contact=Social Contact Cog.Interest=Cognitive Interest
Findings from this current study suggest many areas for further research in adult education; findings also infer new directions for program planners and practitioners working with a growing population of older adults.

A summary of the findings from this study and recommendations for research and practice are presented in the final chapter.
VII. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Participation in learning activities provides one important social strategy for addressing the potentials and problems of aging individuals in an aging society. Enhancing participation in these learning activities presents a significant adult education challenge. Many participation studies have focused on participation in more traditional, institutionally-based educational pursuits and painted a singular portrait of the older learner, one that assumed decreases in participation with increasing age. This present study, however, viewed learning across a wider range of activities than currently addressed in the literature and sketched multiple images of older adults engaged in a diverse selection of growth and socially-oriented learning activities.

The purpose of this study was to characterize participation in a broad range of learning activities in later life and to examine the relationship between this participation and selected personal and sociodemographic measures influencing participation. The research design involved a descriptive-correlational study using a mailed questionnaire. Questionnaires completed by 332 non-institutionalized volunteer adults over the age of 55 were analyzed using the SPSS.PC+ V.3.0 (SPSS, Inc., 1988) statistical package.

The average age of respondents in this study was 70.0 years, spanning a range from 55 to 91 years. Over 73% of respondents were
female; 23% were male. A majority of respondents lived alone. Approximately 40% of respondents were currently married and over 34% were widowed. Most respondents were fully retired (83.4%). The median income was $20,000.00 spanning a range from $1,200.00 to $110,000.00. The median completed level of education was "Some vocational or technical education"; educational levels ranged from "Some elementary" to "Post-graduate completed".

Over 32% of respondents reported being "Very satisfied" with their lives; nearly 28% reported being in "Excellent" health. A majority reported being "Satisfied" with their lives and nearly 48% reported being in "Good" health. A large majority reported having a confidant and belonging to a community or professional organization.

For this study, a learning activity was broadly defined as any experience in which adults over the age of 55 reported that learning occurred. This is congruent with current thinking reported by Courtenay & Long (1987) who suggested that education for the older adult should include "any learning opportunity provided for or by the older adult" (p.83). For each respondent, participation was measured in three ways: (a) the number of learning activities engaged in over the past year; (b) a rate of participation representing the average frequency of participation across 71 learning activities; and, (c) the number of hours per week engaged in learning activities. Over the past year, on average, older adults reported participating in 35 learning activities for an average of 14 hours per week.
The ten most important learning activities were: reading books or plays; watching Public Broadcasting System, Knowledge Network, or educational TV; reading newspapers or magazines; travelling; talking with family or friends; attending community or senior centres; watching the news; observing nature and life; visiting libraries; and listening to the radio. Only two of the 71 learning activities, taking correspondence courses and bowling, were not considered as an important learning activity by at least one older adult.

Respondents who reported participation in a greater number of learning activities were younger, more educated, and in better self-reported health. They also were more likely to belong to community or professional associations, to report more reasons for participation and more sponsoring agencies to support their learning activities. Respondents who reported greater rates of participation in learning activities were more likely female and of lower income. Although there were significant relationships between participation and age, education, and income, these relationships were much smaller than anticipated.

Across all activities, older adults reported participating in learning activities as frequently as when they were forty. There was, however, a restructuring of activity choices since the age of forty. Older adults were more likely to participate in senior centre activities; watching Public Broadcasting, Knowledge Network and educational television; reflecting on life events; observing nature and life; dieting and watching weight; reducing stress levels; doing
volunteer work; watching the news; discussing with grandchildren; reading newspapers or magazines; and, watching other than educational television. They were less likely to participate in learning for a job; hunting fishing, hiking or camping; taking correspondence courses, dancing, caring for a pet, running and jogging, bicycling, and bowling. Participation in more learning activities than when forty was significantly related to more positive self-reports of health but was not related to the age or sex of respondent.

Choices of learning activities reflected preferences about the sponsorship and organization of an activity. Four organizational choices of older adults were measured in this study: sponsoring agencies, time of day of participation, participation alone or in groups, and participation in age-segregated or age-integrated learning activities. The most frequently reported sponsoring agencies for learning activities were senior centres, media, and oneself. On average, respondents reported using three sponsoring agencies to support their current learning activities. Older adults also reported engaging in learning activities primarily in the daytime, usually in groups, and usually with members of their own age group.

The five most frequently reported reasons for participation were essentially growth and socially-oriented: to keep the mind alive, gaining knowledge or skills, meeting or being with friends, for personal development, and for entertainment. On average, respondents reported six reasons for participation in learning activities. Those who
participated more gave more reasons why they participated, were younger, and were more likely to belong to a community or professional organization than were those who reported fewer reasons for participation.

The largest percentage of respondents reported that "Being too busy" was the major barrier to additional participation. Other frequently reported barriers to participation were transportation, money, location of the activity, and health. Respondents reported an average of two barriers to their participation in learning activities. Reporting more barriers to participation was significantly related to lower income, living alone, poorer health and lower life-satisfaction.

An initial factor analysis suggested several themes that underlay participation in learning activities in later life. These themes included: Volunteer Involvement, Recreation, Home Life, Self Development, Spiritual Enrichment, Wellness, Language Arts, Crafts, Leisure, Expressive, Outdoors/Nature, Hobbies, and Reflection/Reading. These thirteen factor groups explained 48% of the variance in participation in learning activities in later life.

Recommendations

Findings from this study suggest conclusions about the older adult as learner; findings also suggest future avenues for research and practice that can enhance the development of learning activities for
older adults. Conclusions and recommendations for research and practice are organized around the eight research questions presented in Chapter I:

1. What types of learning activities do older adults engage in?
2. What are the most important learning activities in later life?
3. What sociodemographic measures influence participation in later life?
4. How does participation in learning activities change from age forty to later life?
5. What choices do older adults make about the sponsorship and organization of their learning activities.
6. What reasons do older adults give for participation in learning activities?
7. What are the barriers to participation in learning activities in later life?
8. Do learning activities group into meaningful factors?

What Types of Learning Activities Do Older Adults Engage In?

Older adults participate in a wide variety of diverse learning activities. Older adults are not a homogeneous population with singular learning needs, interests and preferences. No one program model or delivery method will meet their learning needs and educational interests. There is no older adult stereotype around which a successful
master program can be developed. Thornton (1986) suggested, "we need to know more about methods of meeting the developmental needs of individuals, informed by an awareness of the great degree of diversity among individuals as they age" (p. 87). Research needs to explore methods, techniques and resources most suited to a diverse population of older learners.

In practice, as educators, we are encouraged to deepen our understanding of diversity in later life and to link this knowledge to appropriate programming decisions. We are challenged to shift our focus from a narrow band of institutionally-sponsored educational programs to a broader range of community-based activities and to develop collaborative program planning efforts involving older learners and community organizations. This wider view of programming reflects concepts of program proposed by Thomas (1964): the idea of an activity for all persons involved (p. 243). Thomas stated that "prime educational value is to be found in the participation by sponsor, teacher, and students in planning the program as well as in carrying it out" (p. 243).

What Are The Most Important Learning Activities in Later Life?

The most important learning activities for older adults spanned a wide range of nonformal and informal activities. Different learning
experiences have different values for each older adult. These findings support recent work by Courtenay (1989) who concluded:

A diverse content and a variety of classroom environments and instructional methods should be developed during the planning of educational experiences for older learners. (p. 532)

The focus of participation research must shift from a narrow perspective to a broader vision of education in the Third Age. As practitioners, we are encouraged to enhance important nonformal and informal learning activities by (a) collaborating with existing community and social support networks; (b) assisting community agencies and media enterprises to develop their educative role; (c) devising techniques and methods consistent with the most appropriate modes of learning in later life; and, (d) recognizing that the learner, and not the sponsor, educator or method is the focal point of each learning enterprise.

What Sociodemographic Factors Influence Participation in Later Life?

Older adults who reported greater participation in learning activities were younger, more likely to be female, to have more education, to be in better self-reported health, and were more likely to belong to community or professional organizations than respondents who reported less participation. Older adults who participated more were also more likely to report more reasons for participation and a greater number of sponsors for their learning activities. Additional research
is necessary to verify the complex web of personal, social, and economic forces that shape participation in later life.

In practice, an understanding of these contextual forces must influence program planning decisions. Men, for example, have lower rates of participation in learning activities. If men are the target audience for health programs, collaborative efforts, innovative marketing schemes and appropriate techniques must be used to motivate greater male participation. Another example involves the relationship between health and participation. Older adults reporting the poorest health participated in many fewer learning activities than those reporting better health. It seems reasonable to propose that learning opportunities for those in the poorest health must be developed in collaboration with their existing support system. Developing learning opportunities aimed at improving the quality of life for seniors in poorer health would be enhanced by research efforts which expand our understanding of existing social networks. In this study, those with poorer health were more likely to participate in self-help groups and discuss with their doctors. This suggests greater financial and educational support for self-help group activities. The Alzheimer's Society and the Arthritis Foundation offer examples of successful educational programs developed within the structure of self-help groups for adults with chronic health problems.

Older adults reporting less participation also reported fewer reason and sponsoring agencies for their learning activities. Three
strategies are suggested for increasing positive forces that can motivate participation: (a) promotional campaigns such as the Canadian "Participaction;" campaign are needed to emphasize the personal value of taking part in learning activities; (b) coordinated media campaigns to report success stories about older learners; and, (c) appropriate advertising to promote learning in later life. Local interest stories, related by older learners, could be the focus of these initiatives. All of these proposed initiatives encourage a more positive view of aging and promote potentials of growth in later life.

How Does Participation in Learning Activities Change From Age Forty to Later Life?

This study provided some clues about changes in participation over the life course. Findings reflected both continuity and change across the life course. Additional longitudinal studies are required to verify these findings and to explore changes in participation across the life course.

In practice, sensitivity to issues of continuity and change will strengthen program planning efforts targeted for older learners. Older adults reported increased participation since age forty in senior centre activities; watching Public Broadcasting System, Knowledge Network and other educational TV; reflecting on life events; learning about health and nutrition, observing nature and life; watching weight; reducing stress levels; doing volunteer work; watching news; discussing with
grandchildren; walking; and, travelling for pleasure. The learning potential within these activities needs to be maximized. For example, a) the media can be used to disperse accurate information about substance abuse and alternatives; b) senior centres can pilot test programs that enhance volunteer roles in later life; and c) innovative programs such as guided autobiography and oral history can be offered to meet interests in reflection and observation in later life; and d) adult educators can become consultants for programs which take a proactive view of wellness in later life.

What Choices Do Older Adults Make about the Sponsorship and Organization of Their Learning Activities?

The three most important sponsors of learning activities for older adults were senior centres, media, and self. This corroborates findings from the literature which suggest the importance of community sponsorship in later life. It also suggests the potential of television as an educative tool and supports the need for more research and development about "a clear understanding of the technologies, their potential uses, and the options and alternatives we have in their application to home and social uses for the elderly" (Straka, 1986, p. 113).

The importance of oneself as a sponsor continues in later life. Recently, Brockett (1985) described a link between self-direction and life satisfaction in later life. Additional research can answer
questions about the relationship between self-direction and such important issues as independence in later life; additional research can also explore methods for enhancing self-direction in later life.

Older adults not only reported their sponsorship preferences but also reported preferences about how their learning activities were organized. The largest percentage of older adults participated during the daytime in age-segregated, group-oriented learning activities. Program planners and administrators need to offer more opportunities for group activities at preferred times and locations to increase older adult participation. Group activities support the social motivation of older learners. Daytime activities are more accessible for those without adequate transportation and reflect a sensitivity to the fears of many seniors who prefer to be at home after dark.

Research needs to be directed towards evaluating when either age-segregated or age-integrated learning activities are most appropriate. Activities to establish meaningful links between generations need to receive high priority. The need for age-segregated programs must also be explored. Learning activities with peers can provide a supportive environment for learning and enhance efforts at increasing self-esteem.

What Are The Reasons For Participation In Later Life?

The most important reasons why older adults participated in learning activities were essentially growth and socially-oriented: to keep one's mind alive, to develop knowledge or skill, to meet or be with
friends, for personal development, and for entertainment. Motivational scales such as the Education Participation Scale (Boshier, 1977, 1983; Boshier & Riddell, 1978) suggest reasons for adults' participation in traditional educational endeavors. They do not, however, fully explore reasons for participation in nonformal and informal learning activities of greatest importance to older adults. Refining the popular Education Participation Scale to reflect motivations of older adults across a wide variety of learning activities would provide educational gerontologists with relevant information to direct programming decisions. Boshier (1985b) reflected that there was a "need to study...the motivation of people who make (and fail to make) use of the broadening array of opportunities for learning in the natural social setting" (p. 152).

Programmers are challenged to offer learning opportunities which address the multiple and varied motivations of later life learners. On average each older adult reported six reasons for participation in learning activities. If the multiple and diverse motivations of older adults are to be met, older adults must be meaningfully involved in every phase of planning, implementation, delivery, and evaluation of learning activities.

The most important reason for participation in this study was to keep one's mind alive. Practical two-day workshops can be developed which provide practitioners with skills to enrich the learning environments for older learner. As one older women commented "we are capable of more than sitting and watching slides." Opportunities for
discussion and personal reflection are essential within varied contexts. One senior expressed her frustration at the structure of many current programs for older learners. She wrote about her experiences at a recent summer program for older adults:

> While the quality and content of lectures was high, it is the fact of being lectured at, of being rendered a passive consumer with hardly a moments time for a brief question that I object to... In other words, find the relevance of courses in the varied lives of seniors themselves, and give maximum opportunity for building interaction, networks, and even friendships.

Another important reason for participation in learning activities was social engagement. Simple additions to existing programs would assist learners to meet needs for social contact: (a) information brokerage about learning networks targeted towards older adults and provided in convenient and familiar locations; (b) group activities incorporated into every program to maximize opportunities for social contact; (c) time set aside at the beginning of each program to facilitate introductions among learners; (d) closure events at the end of each program to encourage learners to exchange addresses and to provide suggestions for learners who want to continue their learning endeavors; (e) name tags provided at all activities.

What Are the Barriers To Participation in Later Life?

The majority of older adults in this study were contacted through senior centres and university programs for older adults. Many of these respondents were already participants in some type of structured
learning activity. Any complete discussion of barriers to participation must, however, include an understanding of the non-participant. It is recommended that additional research be undertaken to examine barriers for non-participants and to compare results with the findings from this study. Older-old, ethnic minorities, and older women facing the quadruple jeopardy of age, gender, financial insecurity, and isolation must be included in this research.

The most frequently reported barrier in this study, being too busy, revealed the active lifestyles of many older adults. A majority of older adults are not passive, but are active growing individuals with important and diverse time and energy commitments. The underlying philosophy of any program which assumes that disengagement and decline are synonymous with advancing age must be questioned. Programmers must accommodate active learners and not marginalize older adults to times and locations not used by younger adult learners.

Transportation to and locations of activities were two frequently reported barriers to further participation. Maps need to be developed which graphically illustrate locations of activities, transportation and housing projects for seniors. These community maps would graphically illustrate areas where there is no easy access to community services. Based upon this information, new activities can be located in convenient locations accessible and familiar to the older adult. The senior centre or church can provide a convenient familiar location for community college programs offered for the older adult. The Senior
Studies Institute at Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton, Alberta, is an example of an educational institution offering programs in senior centres, drop-in centres, and shopping malls. Private homes provide a possible location for learning groups. The community college could function as a host centre for these satellite in-home learners. These small satellites could meet as a large group a few times a session to share ideas, information and friendship. Innovative programming is needed to minimize the barriers that transportation and location pose for many older learners.

Older adults reported that health was an important barrier to additional participation in learning activities. It was those who reported "Very poor" health who reported participating in a many fewer learning activities. Those who reported "Poor" health, however, remained moderately active learners. Research and programming efforts need to focus on improving access for older adults with chronic health problems. As educators, we can minimize health barriers from two perspectives. First, more activities need to be developed for older adults who are unable to attend organized programs. This implies effective use of the media and of a growing number of capable older volunteers. Secondly, existing facilities can be renovated and technological resources can be developed to allow the learner to stay active for as long as possible. Television, radio, video and audio cassettes, and computers are underutilized as educative resources for home-bound older adults. SeniorNet is one example of a non-profit
computer network designed for adults over 55 which is already increasing possibilities of social contact for many house-bound and disabled seniors.

Do Learning Activities Group into Meaningful Factors?

An initial factor analysis of 71 learning activities produced 13 factors to summarize 48% of the variance in participation in learning activities in later life. These factors are: Volunteer Involvement; Recreation; Home Life; Self Development; Spiritual Enrichment; Wellness; Writing & Languages; Crafts; Leisure; Expressive; Outdoors/Nature; Hobbies, and, Reflection/Reading.

These factor groups describe an older population interested in developing meaningful growth-oriented lives. Although it is important for programmers to recognize problems associated with aging, it is equally important to implement programs that recognize potentials for development in later life. Programs need to be targeted towards developing the volunteer role in later life. Other activities can enhance meaningful leisure roles in later life and recognize the relevance of spiritual enrichment, wellness, and reflection for older learners.

Conclusions

Several themes run through the conclusions and recommendation from this study. These themes suggest an agenda of research and practice.

The most urgent research projects include:
1. Involving older adults as collaborators in research efforts.

2. Expanding participation studies to include a broader range of nonformal and informal activities than currently presented in the literature.

3. Investigating the relationship between participation and contextual factors such as health status, social networks, friendship patterns, and belonging to community and professional organizations.

4. Establishing longitudinal research to assess changes in participation through the life course.

5. Devising a motivational scale which recognizes the diversity of motivational orientations of older adults across nonformal, informal and self-directed activities.

6. Extending participation studies to include the older-old and ethnic minorities in research.

7. Evaluating appropriate techniques, methods and resources for increasing the effectiveness of informal, nonformal and self-directed learning activities.

8. Developing educational tools such as self-esteem and assertiveness workshops for increasing self-direction in later life.

9. Defining the most appropriate uses for age-integrated and age-segregated programs.
Important suggestions for practice include:

1. Establishing councils or committees composed of community administrators, adult educators, and older adults to develop collaborative educational planning, implementation, and evaluation.

2. Offering programs that empower older adult learners and enhance their teaching skills.

3. Integrating knowledge about diversity in later life into programming decisions.

4. Training facilitators, community practitioners and volunteers about the potentials and problems of later life.

5. Collaborating with researchers to evaluate techniques and resources that enhance learning in nonformal, informal, and self-directed settings.

6. Pilot testing innovative programs for volunteer enrichment, spiritual enhancement, wellness, and reflection.

7. Incorporating older adults' preferences for daytime, community sponsored, group activities into program planning decisions.

8. Providing opportunities for both age-integrated and age-segregated participation.

As educational gerontologists, we are challenged to understand the potentials and problems of older learners. There are very real problems affecting many older adults that must influence program planning decisions. Alternatively, for many older adults, later life is a time
to explore new options and a time to engage in collaborative endeavors which enhance interdependence and the quality of life. To date, however, there is still only limited interaction among older adults, community agencies, and professional educators to develop relevant learning activities for learners in later life. There is limited collaboration and the possibility for duplication of program efforts and expenditures is great. Agency boundaries can become rigid limiting the flow of information or ideas between groups. Learning activities can be developed with limited information about the personal, social, and economic realities which shape participation in later life.

Findings from this study challenge traditional educational institutions and community organizations to move towards more collaborative endeavors with older learners. The older adult must be a valued consultant in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities. Without their support, program planning efforts for older learners will meet, at best, with limited success. The wisdom of a generation who has survived a major depression, two world wars, and two decades of rapid technological change must be directed towards creating better personal and community futures.

It is not a matter of giving "power" to older people but of restoring to them the right to live, not merely to survive; to be as others, and not to be left on one side; to continue to enquire into things, to make discoveries and to develop interests on their own.

Etore Gelpi,
A Future for Lifelong Education

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References


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Appendix B

LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN LATER LIFE CHECKLIST

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are a list of activities in which people often learn. Please look at each activity and CIRCLE the letter that best represents HOW OFTEN you have taken part in the activity during the past year. Then CIRCLE if you NOW do each activity "LESS", the "SAME", or "MORE" than when you were 40. Finally, go back over the list of activities and CIRCLE the TEN MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES in your life these days. Move quickly through the list and use the following codes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW OFTEN DO YOU TAKE PART IN EACH ACTIVITY?</th>
<th>NOW, I TAKE PART &quot;MORE&quot; THE &quot;SAME&quot; OR &quot;LESS&quot; THAN WHEN I WAS 40?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = Never</td>
<td>Less = not as often now as when I was 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = Annually</td>
<td>Same = about the same now as when I was 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q = Quarterly</td>
<td>More = more often now than when I was 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M = Monthly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W = Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Daily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>Circle One</th>
<th>Circle One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attending legion activities</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Going to community or senior centres</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Observing nature and life</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reflecting on life events</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Traveling for pleasure</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talking with family &amp; friends</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Discussing with grandchildren</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Learning to manage my money</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Taking general interest courses</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Taking hobby related courses</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Attending lectures</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Taking correspondence courses</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Reading newspapers or magazines</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Reading books or plays</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Writing autobiography,journal,diary</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Writing letters</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Writing books,plays,stories,poetry</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Visiting libraries</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Visiting museums and art galleries</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Attending concerts/musical events</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Drawing,painting,sketching,sculpting</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Playing a musical instrument</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Singing/being part of a choral group</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Attending plays or theatre</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Being part of theatre/drama group</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Learning a language</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Doing decorative crafts,ceramics etc</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Doing needlecraft sewing,quilting</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Collecting stamps, coins, etc</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Photography</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Woodworking, carpentry, carving</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Dancing</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Playing cards, chess,checkers</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

188
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>N A Q M W D</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Playing bingo</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Doing crossword/jig-saw puzzles</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Repairing and home maintenance</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Repairing my car</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Cooking or baking</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Caring for a pet</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Dieting and watching my weight</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Learning about health/nutrition</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Reducing my stress levels</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Discussing with doctors</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Discussing with other health workers</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Being in a self-help group</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Attending counselling or therapy</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Learning for my current job</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Taking part in a professional group</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Watching PBS, Knowledge Network, other educational TV</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Watching news</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Watching other TV</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Listening to radio</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Listening to records and tapes</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Using a computer</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Exercising, aerobics, keep-fit</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Doing tai chi/yoga/meditation</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Running or jogging</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Golfing</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Hunting, fishing, hiking, camping</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Taking part in political events</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Working on committees</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Working on community programs</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Doing other volunteer work</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Attending religious activities</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Working in a church/religious group</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Discovering my spiritual being</td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE WRITE IN ANY OTHER IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR LIFE NOW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>N A Q M W D</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td>N A Q M W D</td>
<td>Less Same More</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOW, PLEASE GO BACK OVER THE LIST OF ACTIVITIES ONE LAST TIME AND CIRCLE THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU LEARN THESE DAYS.**
Please answer the following questions to assist us in understanding how activity patterns differ. Please either CIRCLE the number which best represents your answer to a question or WRITE IN in the best answer for you in the blank provided.

1. WHAT WAS YOUR AGE AT YOUR LAST BIRTHDAY?
   _______ years

2. ARE YOU?
   1. female
   2. male

3. WHAT IS YOUR MARITAL STATUS?
   1. single, never married
   2. married, common-law, cohabiting
   3. divorced
   4. widowed

4. WITH WHOM DO YOU LIVE?
   1. alone
   2. with spouse only
   3. with child only
   4. with spouse & child
   5. with friend or relative
   6. Other (PLEASE WRITE IN)

5. ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING FOR PAY?
   1. working for pay full-time
   2. working for pay part-time
   3. no, fully retired
   4. retired and work part-time for pay

6. WHAT IS/WAS YOUR PRIMARY OCCUPATION DURING YOUR WORK YEARS?
   ____________________

7. IN ROUND NUMBERS WHAT WAS YOUR TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME BEFORE TAXES LAST YEAR?
   $__________ last year

8. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED?
   1. some elementary school
   2. elementary school completed
   3. some high school
   4. high school completed
   5. some vocational/technical school
   6. vocational/technical school completed
   7. some university
   8. university degree completed
   9. some post graduate work
   10. post graduate work completed
   11. OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN)

9. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR LIFE THESE DAYS?
   1. very dissatisfied
   2. dissatisfied
   3. satisfied
   4. very satisfied

10. FOR YOUR AGE, DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR HEALTH TO BE?
    1. very poor
    2. poor
    3. fair
    4. good
    5. excellent

11. IS THERE A SPECIAL PERSON YOU TRUST OR CONFIDE IN?
    1. no
    2. yes

12. DO YOU BELONG TO A SENIOR CENTRE COMMUNITY, CHURCH OR PROFESSIONAL GROUP?
    1. no
    2. yes

13. WHAT TIME OF DAY DO YOU USUALLY TAKE PART IN "Out of Home" LEARNING ACTIVITIES THESE DAYS?
    1. mornings only
    2. afternoons only
    3. nights only
    4. mornings and afternoons
    5. mornings, afternoons and nights

PLEASE TURN TO THE LAST PAGE
14. DO YOU TAKE PART IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES
   1. usually with your own age group
   2. usually with various age groups
   3. about equally with own & other ages

15. DO YOU TAKE PART IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES
   1. usually alone
   2. usually with a group
   3. about equally alone & group

16. PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THE GROUPS THAT PLAN OR OFFER IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR YOU THESE DAYS.
   1. business or industry
   2. media: TV or Radio
   3. senior centres
   4. other community or government agencies
   5. yourself
   6. churches
   7. schools, colleges, universities
   8. self-help groups
   9. OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN)

17. THINK BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE 40.
    PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THE GROUPS THAT PLANNED OR OFFERED IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR YOU THEN.
    1. business or industry
    2. media: TV or Radio
    3. senior centres
    4. other community or government agencies
    5. yourself
    6. churches
    7. schools, colleges, universities
    8. self-help groups
    9. OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN)

18. PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THE IMPORTANT REASONS WHY YOU TAKE PART IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES THESE DAYS.
    1. meeting or being with friends
    2. gaining knowledge or skills
    3. for my job or work
    4. because someone recommended it
    5. for the community
    6. to escape from boredom
    7. for my health
    8. for physical fitness
    9. for relaxation
    10. for entertainment
    11. for personal development
    12. to keep my mind alive
    13. as a break from routine

19. PLEASE CIRCLE ALL IMPORTANT REASONS STOPPING YOU FROM TAKING PART IN MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES THESE DAYS.
    1. money
    2. transportation
    3. seeing or hearing problems
    4. I'm too old
    5. family responsibilities
    6. too busy
    7. no one to go with
    8. I'd feel uncomfortable
    9. location of activity
    10. I'm not interested
    11. time activity offered
    12. health problems
    13. registration procedures
    14. not enough information
    15. I don't see any value for me
    16. OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN)

20. THINK BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE 40.
    PLEASE CIRCLE ALL IMPORTANT REASONS THAT STOPPED YOU FROM TAKING PART IN MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES THEN.
    1. money
    2. transportation
    3. seeing and hearing problems
    4. I was too old
    5. family responsibilities
    6. too busy
    7. no one to go with
    8. I felt uncomfortable
    9. location of the activity
    10. I wasn't interested
    11. time activity offered
    12. health problems
    13. registration procedures
    14. not enough information
    15. I didn't see any value for me
    16. OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN)

21. ABOUT HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU SPEND IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES THESE DAYS?
    About _______ hours

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE CIRCLED THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR LIFE THESE DAYS ON THE ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & EFFORT

Completion of this questionnaire indicates that you have given your consent to participate.