

Accompanying Older Adults Through Artistic Creation: Practice and Exploration of Art Programs

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Abstract

As society continues to age, art programs for older adults, commonly referred to as “active aging” programs, have generated significant social demand and provide important sources of enjoyment and learning opportunities for sub-healthy older adults. This study was based on the understanding that visual art creation can enhance hand–eye coordination, stimulate brain activity, and promote social interaction among older adults. Using art educational therapy theory as the instructional approach, and drawing upon the theoretical framework of art therapy media, the researcher designed visual art courses suitable for older adults.

The program was implemented at a suburban community center, consisting of one 90-minute session per week for a total of four sessions. Participant observation was employed to document the instructional process. After each session, detailed records were made regarding the older adults’ creative behaviors and artistic expressions. Finally, purposive sampling was used to select five older adults who were highly engaged in the art group for semi-structured interviews. The purpose was to understand the differences in participants’ perspectives before and after the art courses, the meanings conveyed through their artworks during participation in the courses, and the personal significance of the social interactions that occurred throughout the learning process.

The findings revealed that the art courses provided positive emotional feedback for older adults and enriched their daily lives with diverse forms of enjoyment. These results may serve as a reference for future related research.

Keywords: Art Programs for Older Adults, Art Educational Therapy, Group Process, Art Therapy Media Theory, Social Interaction