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OLDER ADULT LEARNERS: REASONS AND PREFERENCES
FOR PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

presented by

Edwin Dale McGraw

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Administration and
Curriculum

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles A. McKee". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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OLDER ADULT LEARNERS: REASONS AND PREFERENCES
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By

Edwin Dale McGraw

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ABSTRACT

OLDER ADULT LEARNERS: REASONS AND PREFERENCES FOR PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

By

Edwin Dale McGraw

Older adults are one of the fastest growing segments of our nation's population, both in numbers and as a proportion of the total population. In order for educational planners to develop meaningful programs for older adults, they need to be aware of reasons that motivate older adults, 65 years of age and older, to participate in organized learning activities.

The three-fold purpose of the study was:

1. To examine relationships between reasons cited by older adult participants in organized learning activities and four independent variables: (a) age levels, (b) levels of formal education attained, (c) levels of program participation, and (d) sites of program participation.
2. To examine preferences older adult participants have for three modes of learning.
3. To compare reasons cited by older adults and younger adults for attending an organized learning activity.

A convenience sample composed of 100 respondents was selected from five sites of program participation located within the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area.

Five research questions were explored. The investigator used a questionnaire to collect data during the fall of 1981.

Reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity and preferences for various modes of learning were ranked by frequency of selection. The chi-square test, at the .05 level, was used to determine whether reasons cited by respondents differed significantly between groups within independent variables.

Some of the pertinent findings and conclusions were:

1. Sites of program participation was the independent variable in which significant differences occurred most frequently in reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity and in preferences cited for modes of learning.

2. Social goals of meeting new people and feeling a sense of belonging were both ranked high by the respondents.

3. Respondents thought their learning needs were best met by a small-group (seminar) type learning experience or a lecture-discussion learning model.

4. The potential for learning as a self-fulfilling and significant activity needs to be stressed for older adults.

The study gives additional support to the claim that the need for mental stimulation is an insatiable, on-going experience, regardless of age.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Background for the Study

Older adults are one of the fastest growing segments of our nation's population, both in numbers and as a proportion of the total population. In 1900, only 3.1 million persons were 65 years of age or older, representing 4.1 percent of the population. By 1975, over 22.4 million adults were 65 and older, representing 10.5 percent of the population (Office of Human Development, 1976). Today, 24.7 million Americans--one in every nine--are 65 or older. Projections indicate that this group, which is increasing annually by 600,000 people, will include 32 million adults, or 12 percent of the population, by the year 2000 (Watkins, 1981). In the year 2030, there will be approximately 50 million Americans over 65 years of age (Reichel, 1978, p. xi).

Since the White House Conference on Aging in 1971, education for older adults has developed to a point where it has become one of the dynamic growth areas in both the field of education and gerontology (McClusky, 1978, p. 25). The increasing number of people living past the age of 65 indicates a need and presents a challenge to provide educational programs for this rapidly growing segment of our population. This was pointed out in the final report of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. The report established the gravity

and scope of the need for education for the aging. Older persons are confronted with threats to their health that frequently occur with advancing age. A great majority of older persons are subject to substantial reductions in income without an equalizing decrease in their continuing need for financial resources. Retirement usually leads to a decline in position with a collateral reduction in status and influence affecting not only the retiree, but also many to whom he is significantly related (McClusky, 1972).

Education has a solution for many of the problems facing older adults. In fact, education is itself an affirmative enterprise. Education for older persons is based on the assumption that it will lead to something better in the lives of those participating. It also proceeds on the assumption that older persons are capable of a constructive response to educational stimulation (McClusky, 1972).

A change in philosophy concerning educational needs for older adults is indicated by reports from the 1981 White House Conference on Aging stressing that we need a tremendous expansion in all kinds of educational programs that contribute to the enrichment, expertise, and enlightenment of the older adult (Watkins, 1981). The minimal ability to read, write, and compute is an inescapable prerequisite to all other higher levels of education. Yet the lack of these skills is far greater for older people than for persons in any other segment of the population. Only 6 percent are college graduates, while one-seventh (three million) are functionally illiterate, with either no schooling or less than five years (Butler, 1977, p. 13).

A minimum of physical energy and health is a prerequisite for participation in most kinds of activities, and after health, a minimum of financial resources becomes necessary. Thus, after the acquisition of basic skills, the need to educate for physical fitness, including the use of instructional procedures to formulate and carry out programs for healthful living, proper exercise and nutritious diets, check-ups and management of convalescence, is near the top of most lists of educational needs for older persons. This is followed by the need to educate for a minimum of economic self-sufficiency, education for selecting good housing and residential facilities, education for making the legal decisions that the later years require, education to help adjust to make the most of changing relations with immediate and extended family, and education to make the most rewarding use of leisure time (McClusky, n.d., p. 333). In addition to these functional needs, "the need to know--the need for intellectual stimulation--is the only insatiable experience" (Grabowski, 1978, p. 216).

If older adults are going to be able to cope with the needs outlined above, they are going to have to participate in programs designed for them to meet such needs. Yet older adults, 65 years of age and older, are among the most underrepresented of all groups in adult educational activities. They represented only 2.3 percent of the participants in adult educational programs in 1975 while making up 10.5 percent of the total population of the country (Peterson et al., 1980, pp. 82-86). Studies by Johnstone and Rivera (1965) and Know (1978) revealed the same trend.

Today's Older Adults and Educational Attainment

Much attention has been given to the fact that the present older population in the United States has had less than a high school education. The educational-attainment data of the 1970 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970) cited the median number of school years completed by males over the age of 60 as 8.8 years, and by females, 9.2 years. However, when one adds to this compilation the data for those who were 55 to 59 years old in 1970 (all of whom are now over 65 years old), the median number of school years completed is increased to 9.2 years for males and 9.6 for females. As of March 1979, 59.9 percent of people 65 years of age and older had less than a high school education (World Almanac, 1982, p. 193). For blacks of the same age group, 65 and over, less than a high school education was 83 percent, and for Spanish origin it was 84.2 percent. These figures tend to bear out the frequently quoted "fact" that the older adults of today are "uneducated" or "undereducated."

Examining only the number of years of school completed can be misleading when describing the older population. It is too often forgotten that before World War I, it was extraordinary for people to attain a twelfth-grade education. Statistical compilations prepared by the U.S. Office of Education reveal that of all the persons in the United States age 17 in the year 1900, only 6.4 percent graduated from high school. In the year 1920, the proportion increased to 16.8 percent; it was not until 1940 that slightly more than half of the 17-year-old population (50.8 percent) completed the twelfth grade (U.S. Office of Education, 1972, Table 197).

Anyone who is 65 or older today would have been at least 17 years old in 1932. Thus, to have achieved completion of high school at the "normal" age, one would be decidedly in the minority of their cohorts. Before 1920, a person with a high school diploma was considered well educated and well equipped to function in the less complex world of that period (Carsman, 1976). It is perhaps safe to say that completion of the twelfth grade was viewed in somewhat the same manner as an undergraduate degree is today. This is not to imply that the extent and quality of the two are the same. It merely indicates that equipping students with the requirements necessary to function adequately in their society was a goal of education then as it is today.

What has accounted for the low level of participation of older adults in organized learning programs? Houle (1961) concluded that the higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely he/she will take part in continuing education. Since many older adults have had so little education to begin with, they are less likely to return to instruction in the later years.

Atchley (1972) suggested that the educational system itself is a reason for the lack of older-adult participation in education. He stated,

Education systems in the United States are youth-oriented and job-oriented. The purpose of the school in America is primarily to prepare the student for a job. Even adult education tends to be oriented around the types of skills needed to secure a better job or to secure a promotion. Only a very tiny portion of the young person's education is devoted to the skills involved in the enjoyment of living, and few of the adult educational programs throughout the country are so oriented. It should not be

too surprising, then, to find that education programs are the last thing most older people would consider in terms of community participation. (p. 233)

The feeling of being too old to learn increases steadily with age until it becomes a common barrier to education for older persons (Peterson et al., 1980, p. 84). The idea that older people cannot learn because intelligence decreases as a person ages has not been substantiated by research. Glick (1976) emphasized that studies showing that general intelligence declines as a function of normalization is pretty much a myth. This was reiterated by Eisdorfer (1969).

There is mounting evidence that people age in different ways and not at the same rate (Butler & Lewis, 1977, p. 20). In fact, people become more individualized as they grow older (Lenz, 1980, p. 98). The differentiation within the individual is exemplified by the distinction between "crystallized" and "fluid" intelligence. Crystallized intelligence is related to experience. Fluid intelligence is based on biological forces (Lenz, 1980). During childhood, as fluid intelligence decreases and as crystallized intelligence increases, general learning ability remains relatively stable, but older persons tend to compensate increasingly for the loss of fluid intelligence by greater reliance on crystallized intelligence, to substitute wisdom for brilliance (Knox, 1978, p. 421).

More than for any other group, the major barriers to group participation of the elderly are motivational, in the sense that many contend that they are too old, lack energy, or are not interested in further education (Peterson et al., 1980, p. 86).

Statement of the Problem

In order for educational planners to develop programs for older adults, they should be aware of reasons that motivate older adults to participate in organized learning activities as well as their preferences for various modes of instruction. Cross (cited by Peterson et al., 1980) summed up the problem when she stated, "Perhaps the single most important area to understand in planning programs for older adult learners is their motives for engaging in learning activities" (p. 112).

An adult can have a variety of reasons for attending a learning activity and is not always precise when stating what those reasons are. Reasons given may be related to such objectives as the opportunity to socialize, the subject matter to be taught, or anticipated benefits to be derived from the experience (Burgess, 1971, p. 4).

The question of how to attract the older adult to the educational scene has been explored from many different points of view (DeCrow, 1974; Goodrow, 1975; Manny, 1975; Moody, 1976; Peterson et al., 1980), but few studies have taken place on why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

Considerable research has been conducted on the reasons adults, up to the age of 60, attend learning activities. Gaps remain, however, in the present state of knowledge as to why older adults, 65 years of age and older, attend organized learning activities.

Need for the Study

The increasing odds in favor of a person reaching 65 years of age are a dividend of our society. The changing adult educational environment, with its influx of older adults, presents a challenge to planners of adult educational programs. The message coming from the 1981 White House Conference on Aging is that educational programs for the aging must be expanded, not cut (Wilkins, 1981).

If planners of educational programs are to develop meaningful programs for these older adults, the reasons older adults cite for attending organized learning activities and the perceived importance of those reasons are extremely important. In addition, more information is needed about preferences older adults have for modes of learning. The information from this study could be of considerable use in weighing policy proposals for the continuing learning programs of older Americans.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine relationships between reasons cited by older adult participants in organized learning activities and four independent variables: (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of educational program participation, and (4) sites of program participation. In addition, preferences older adult participants have for three modes of learning are examined: (1) how a learning activity is conducted, (2) time schedule for an activity, and (3) frequency of an activity. Also, the percentage of reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized

learning activity is compared with the percentage cited by younger adults using the CNS study reported by Cross (1974) where appropriate.

Results of studies by Johnston and Rivera (1955), the Commission on Non-Traditional Studies (1974), McClusky (1974), Peterson et al. (1980), and others show that there appear to be three demographic variables that are highly relevant to educational planning for the older adult: age, educational attainment, and place of residence. Therefore, the focus of this study is on the relationship between the dependent variable, reasons cited by older adults for participating in organized learning activities, and the independent variables of (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of program participation, and (4) sites of program participation. The intention was to see if reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity by older adult participants differ significantly between groups classified by the independent variables listed above.

In addition, an investigation was made of the preferences older adults have for three modes of learning: (1) methods of instruction, (2) activity time schedule, and (3) frequency of an activity.

Reasons were also compared for attending an organized learning activity cited by older adult participants in this study with those cited by younger adult participants of the CNS study (Cross, 1974).

Assumptions

Three underlying assumptions of the study were: (1) older adults attend organized learning activities for one or more reasons of which they are aware; (2) educators need a better understanding as to why older adults participate in organized learning activities, and what their preferences are for various modes of learning; and (3) reasons that motivate older adults to participate in organized learning activities are adequately represented by the 20 items listed in the questionnaire (Appendix C). The questionnaire was developed from the CNS study as reported by Cross (1974).

Delimitations and Scope of the Study

The study was limited to adults, 65 years of age or older, living within 20 miles of the center of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and enrolled in one or more organized learning activities. This area is composed of a diverse population including inner-city, urban, suburban, and rural residents. A convenience sample was selected to assure representation from five different sites of adult community education programs: Caledonia--a rural area, Jenison Plaza--a suburban area, United Methodist Community House--an inner-city area, the Grandview Apartment Complex--an urban area, and the Aquinas Emeritus College--with no specified area of geographic representation.

Four levels of educational program participation were identified. The four levels of program participation identified and their sponsoring organizations were: (1) adult basic education--the United Methodist Community House and the Grand Rapids Board of Education;

(2) high school completion--Caledonia and Grandville Adult and Community Education program; (3) program enrichment--Caledonia, Grandville, and Grand Rapids Adult and Community Education programs; and (4) college level, noncredit, fine arts--Emeritus College of Aquinas College, Grand Rapids.

Responses are limited to items listed in the questionnaire used in the study.

Limitations of the Study

The sample population is not one of random selection; therefore, generalizations to older adult learners participating in organized learning activities is not appropriate. Conclusions from the study are limited to the sample that responded to the questionnaire. The study is further limited by the respondents' willingness both to participate and to complete the questionnaire accurately and honestly.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study and a review of the literature, the following questions were formulated for exploration:

1. How important to the respondents are the reasons for attending an organized learning activity?
2. Do reasons cited by older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?
3. How important to the respondents are the preferences cited for the modes of learning?

4. Do preferences cited for modes of learning by older adult participants of organized learning activities differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

5. How do reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized learning activity in this study compare with the reasons cited by younger adult participants (using the CNS study [1974] for comparison purposes where appropriate)?

Modes of Learning

The modes of learning used in the study are (1) methods of instruction, (2) activity time schedule, and (3) frequency of an activity.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics (independent variables) selected for use in the study are:

1. Age levels
 - a. Age 65-69
 - b. Age 70-74
 - c. Age 75 and above
2. Levels of formal education attained
 - a. Grades 1-8
 - b. Grades 9-12
 - c. College and graduate school
3. Levels of educational program participation
 - a. Adult basic education
 - b. High school completion
 - c. Personal enrichment
 - d. College level, noncredit, fine arts

4. Sites of program participation
 - a. Grandville, Jenison Plaza
 - b. Caledonia, Board of Education Building
 - c. Grandview Apartments, Grand Rapids
 - d. United Methodist Community House, Grand Rapids
 - e. Aquinas Emeritus College, Grand Rapids

Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms that follow are presented to aid in the interpretation and clarification of the study.

Adult basic education (ABE): Roughly equivalent to elementary education for adults, with emphasis on the development of communicational and coping skills, including English as a Second Language (Smith & Heald, 1978).

Adult education: This most comprehensive term refers to all educational activities, institutionally sponsored or self-directed, engaged in by persons who have assumed responsibility for directing their own lives and the roles commonly associated with adulthood (Smith & Heald, 1978).

Adult learner: Persons 17 years of age or older, not enrolled full time in high school or college, but engaged in one or more organized learning activities.

College-level, noncredit, fine arts courses: Educationally stimulating, noncredit, college-level courses in the liberal arts area, requiring no prerequisites, examinations, or grades.

Community: A location in geographical space (Atchley, 1972, p. 257).

High school completion: Secondary education for adults--for persons who function at less than a twelfth-grade level. Includes programs preparing one to take the Certificate of General Education (GED) exam (Smith & Heald, 1978).

Modes of learning: For the purpose of this study, this term refers to (1) methods of instruction, (2) activity time schedule, and (3) frequency of an activity.

Older adult learner: A person, 65 years of age or older, not enrolled full time in college, but engaged in or recently engaged in one or more organized learning activities (Smith & Heald, 1978).

Organized learning activity: An adult-education course, workshop, seminar, etc., in which the participants are registered or enrolled, normally offered at a set time and place under the direction of a school, college, church neighborhood center, community organization, or other recognized authority. Sunday school classes and other activities that could be considered worship services are not included.

Personal enrichment courses: Courses designed for personal self-fulfillment; includes academic, recreational, and social learning activities at the post-high-school level.

Program director: The individual responsible for the operational functions of an institutionally sponsored organized learning activity.

Overview of the Study

The dissertation is composed of five chapters. The setting for the study is presented in Chapter I. It includes background for

the study, need for the study, definition of terms, scope of the study, delimitations, assumptions, limitations, and research questions.

The review of the literature is contained in Chapter II.

A description of the research design and procedure is found in Chapter III. Included in the description is information relating to the population sample, pilot study, procedural findings of the pilot study, instruments used, collection of data, restatement of the research questions, and statistical methods used.

An in-depth study of the findings, analysis, summary, and discussion of each question is found in Chapter IV. Included are a restatement of each question, an introduction followed by an analysis and presentation of pertinent data, and a discussion of the findings. Information about the respondents and about each of the five unique groups is also presented, along with a discussion of the respondents of the study.

A summary of significant findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future studies are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter is divided into two conceptual areas: (1) adult education as it relates to the older adult and (2) reasons for attending organized learning activities as they relate to the older adult.

Two factors have had a profound influence on the literature found in these areas. The first was the relatively recent recognition of older adults as a distinct group, and the second was the increase in funding, both state and federal, available for work in these areas during the last decade and a half. The result has been an outpouring of nonscientific or "critical" articles and a proliferation of descriptions of programs and "successes." This review incorporated both the "critical" and the scientific literature that seemed to be pertinent to the study. McClusky (1971) seemed to summarize best the state of the art by writing:

When we search the world of scholarship for "hard data" related to the education of older people, we emerge from our inquiry with several substantial impressions. First, such data on the education of older persons is extremely limited; obviously, this is a domain much neglected by educational research. Second, with respect to the amount of formal education attained, older persons are extremely disadvantaged. Third, rates of participation by the aging in activities designed for the education of adults are very low, in fact the lowest of all age segments of the population. Fourth, the ability of older people to learn continues at a high functional level well into the later years, age, therefore, in itself, being no barrier to learning.

In brief, then, older people are for the most part seriously deficient in formal education, generally non-participant in educational activities, but at the same time capable of an educational response far greater than that offered by existing opportunities and presumably expected by society. (p. 9)

Adult Education and the Older Adult

The literature in this area is divided into two main sections: research and practice. The research section is composed of two overlapping subsections: (1) theory as to why there should be adult education for older adults and how adult education for older adults should be conducted and (2) studies conducted in the area of older adult education.

A major basis for the knowledge of education for older adults seems to be Donahue's book, Education for Later Maturity (1955). It was one of the first books of its kind, with experts from various fields asked to contribute ideas to its content. According to Peterson (1976), little has changed since that time. Activities have been added ad hoc rather than being based on a "comprehensive, philosophical framework" (p. 62). DeMott (1975) supported this viewpoint, saying that

lifelong learning cries out for a philosophy that's adequate to its elements of uniqueness and to its potential as a social force. And no such philosophy can emerge from those who continue to treat "adult" as a stop-gap, a filler, a way of staving off doomsday for one more brief season. (p. 29)

The theories that have emerged about the purpose of education of the older adult express different viewpoints. The theory that education becomes a "work substitute" was represented by Heyman (1969) and DeCrow (1974). Educational program planners who follow this theory

offer courses in arts and crafts, ceramics, jewelry making, painting, etc. (London, 1970). McClusky (1971), London (1970), and Peterson (1975) represented the idea that new competencies needed by older adults to cope with their world should be obtained through education. McClusky (1971) went further to state that "education for Old Persons is an investment by society in resource development" (p. 8). Londoner (1971) stressed the advantages of instrumental over expressive education for older adults.

Theories indicating that education should implement and expand the use of leisure time and help the older adult with the present world were supported by Kidd (1955), state agencies (Toward a National Policy on Aging, 1971), and federal agencies (DeCrow, 1974).

Moody (1976) proposed a philosophical justification for educating older adults incorporating all the above theories. He maintained that there are four stages in elderly education development: Stage I, rejection, was the rejection of education for older people. Stage II, social services, "could best be described as entertainment or 'keeping busy.' Older people are still outside society" (p. 5). Stage III of the educational setting "should be designed to avoid the unhealthy aspects of disengagement and instead should focus on second careers and on the discovery of new ways of participating more vigorously in society" (p. 6). Moody's Stage IV is to "make available to older people the great ideas of the humanities and the social sciences that can nourish (humanistic) psychological development in old age" (p. 11). The direction of Stage IV should be inner directed, according to Moody.

Despite these theories as to why there should be education for the older adult, researchers have found a low level of concern and an underrepresentation of older adults in the educational system (Carp, 1975; Robinson, 1972; Wasserman, 1976). Peterson (1980) found that only 2.3 percent of adults 65 and older participated in organized learning activities in 1975 (p. 82).

Goodrow (1975) suggested six recommendations as a result of his Knox County study:

1. Educational opportunities designed for older adults should be offered within the immediate neighborhood.
2. Older adult learning programs should be designed to encourage active participation from each person with little emphasis placed on evaluation procedures.
3. Academic goals of older adults differ greatly from those of the younger student. Therefore, differing evaluative procedures should be employed for each group.
4. Initial attempts to organize older adults should relate to overcoming past apprehensions and provide the participant with positive experiences relevant to present needs and interests.
5. Well-designed learning programs should be scheduled around the time periods desired by the population to be served, not the educational institution.
6. Written materials should be selected with consideration for the visual limitations of the older person.

Sweeney (1973) expanded on the ideas presented by Goodrow. He presented a range of variables that might be encountered in an older adult class.

Many examples of adult education classes for the older adult are to be found in the literature. Some representative types were reported by Cross (1974), Maeroff (1975), Gage (1975), and "Adult Education Classes in Pittsfield" (1977). These classes covered a range of different types from "academic" to "leisure." Cross (1974) and Hooper (1978) conducted surveys of preferences of class type instruction and found that lecture was the most popular method.

If we use a broad definition of adult learning that includes self-planned or self-directed learning, which has been the subject of several research studies (Pennland, 1977; Tough, 1971), we would include between 79 and 98 percent of the adult population as lifelong learners (Peterson, 1980, p. 76). The work by Carp (1974) and Broschart (1976) found that (1) the pool of adult learners was made up of middle-income individuals; "The better off a person is financially, the more likely he or she is to be involved in learning" (Arbeiter, 1976, p. 24); (2) adults who engage in activities tended to be relatively well educated, and the use of formal educational systems increased with the education level of the learner; and (3) more urban than rural residents prefer educational institutions for study. Rural students prefer self-study.

McClusky (1975) summed up the status of adult education for older adults by saying: "Adult education is a stepchild of the

educational establishment. Education for older people is an orphan living in the stepchild's attic."

Reasons for Attending Organized Learning Activities

The adult learner is usually not precise when giving reasons for participating in educational activities. Sometimes the objective of the course is given as a reason, and sometimes the subject to be taught is given as the reason for attending. Researchers have, therefore, used at least four different approaches to determine the reasons why adults are active in organized learning activities. These methods are:

1. Analyzing the kinds of activities in which the adult student participates so that reasons can be inferred for these activities.
2. Asking the adult students to state in their own words why they participate in a given activity.
3. Asking the adult student to check from a list of reasons why he/she participates in a given activity.
4. Concentrating on the student's orientation toward education.

Examples of each of these four approaches are cited in the sections that follow.

Analyzing the Types of Activities

The results of a study published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Woodward, 1961) included the adult

education enrollment figures in classes offered by the United States local school systems in 1958-59. The vocational, practical, and remedial subjects were predominant. Almost half of the enrollees were in courses of a vocational nature, such as agriculture courses; trade, industrial, and technical courses; and business education. Slightly over one-fourth were enrolled in personal-development courses, such as fine arts, techniques in practical arts and crafts, and health and physical education. A substantial percentage of participants were enrolled in courses of a remedial nature, such as literacy education, elementary education, and high school academic education.

A study conducted by a joint committee made up of members from the Association of University Evening Colleges and the National University Extension Association (McGee, 1964-65) included the number and percentage of individuals who registered in 11 categories of subject matter in 224 American universities. The 11 categories were largely in vocational or professional fields, such as agriculture, business, education, health professions, and law.

Areas of interest for engaging in educational activities can be determined, to some degree, by analyzing enrollment figures. The figures also have value for staff members who plan for future courses. The analysis of enrollment data, however, does not always provide adequate information for determining why an individual participates. He may have had previous learning experiences that have motivated him to participate in the course or courses in which he is enrolled.

Asking the Student to State in His Own Words Why He Participates

The second approach asks adults to state in their own words why they participate in a given learning activity. Williams and Heath (1936) reported on reasons given by working-class adults who were attending classes in England, Scotland, and Wales. The investigators grouped the reasons given into four categories: The Escape Motive, Restoring the Balance, The Respite from Economic Ends, and The Discovery of Fellowship. Dean (1949) reported on results obtained from asking 264 adults, "Take the most recent course as your example. What were your reasons for taking it, or what did you think it would do for You?" The question was answered by American students in Great Books discussion groups in a public library and in both credit and noncredit courses in an evening high school, a college, and a university. Dean classified the reasons given into four groups: "practical vocational help, as a college degree or promotional reasons"; "not for regular vocation, but practical utilitarian purposes as learning Spanish for a trip to Mexico"; and "escape from boredom, recreation, or just curiosity."

The technique used by Dean and by Williams and Heath has both strengths and weaknesses. The technique assists in determining why the adult attends a particular event at a particular time. In addition, when responses from all the adults were considered, a clustering of reasons emerged in each of the independent studies. A weakness of this technique, however, is that an individual probably cannot, on short notice and without assistance, think of all the

influential reasons for engaging in educational activities. McKee (1981) cited the following reasons given by 40 older adults ages 65-84 who were enrolled in a week-long Elderhostel program conducted by Michigan State University in Traverse City, Michigan, during the summer of 1981: to learn something new, for new acquaintances and new ideas, to learn how to be more creative, for mental stimulation, and in thinking about the next 20 years.

Selecting Reasons From a Prepared List

A third method is to ask the adult learner to indicate from a prepared list of possible reasons the ones influencing him to take part in a particular learning activity. Hall (1965) used previous research, personality theory, analysis of various philosophical viewpoints, and in-depth interviews to compile a list of more than 200 reasons for participation. With the help of judges, she refined a list of seven groups of reasons for belonging. She named the groups of reasons "pursuit of knowledge for individual general growth," "pursuit of esteem," "pursuit of knowledge for improving society," "pursuit of sociability," "pursuit of knowledge for improving home-making competence," "pursuit of diversion," and "pursuit of social expectations." Using a Q-sort technique, she then secured reasons for club participation from 751 members of Illinois Homemakers' Clubs. After analyzing the results, she found different patterns of reasons for members throughout the state and also within each of the clubs.

Wanderer (1961) developed a list of 24 statements and asked participants in Great Decisions programs to indicate from the list "something you definitely had in mind as a reason for joining Great Decisions." He then used a cluster analysis technique to group the 671 responses to the 24 statements into five categories "of items . . . more highly associated with items within the cluster than with items outside the cluster." He called the groups "Cluster A--Self Help," "Cluster B--Social Extension," "Cluster C--Learning," "Cluster D--Improvement," and "Cluster D--Escape."

The third method has the value of determining why the adult attends a particular event at a particular time. Studies using this method have shown the reasons for engaging in educational activities cluster into groups. Two weaknesses of this method are (1) not using a complete list (of reasons from which to choose) of studied reasons for educational endeavors and (2) the respondents' answers are based on influences for engaging in a single type of educational activity.

Concentrating on an Individual's Orientation Toward Learning

The fourth procedure for studying why adults continue to learn is based on a concept developed and explored by Houle (1961) and studied further by Sheffield (1962). In both studies, an effort was made to concentrate on an individual's orientation toward learning. The basic starting point of the concept is "not the act of participation but the participant. We would not then judge men by individual acts but would judge such acts by the men who perform

them (Houle, 1961, p. 9). Houle (1961) identified and described three subgroups: (1) the goal oriented are those who use education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives, (2) the activity or social-participation oriented are those who take part because they find in the circumstances of the learning a meaning that has no necessary connection at all with the content of the activity, and (3) the learning oriented are those who seek knowledge for its own sake. In Houle's study, the majority of the adult learners were goal oriented, followed by learning oriented and activity (social-participation) oriented.

These three orientations were observed in an adult-student-profile study by McKee (1972) of 1,700 enrollees in the Michigan State University Evening College. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed responded as goal oriented, another 35 percent sought knowledge for its own sake (learning oriented), and 10 percent were activity oriented or sought a social situation.

Sheffield (1962) prepared a list of 58 reasons why adults said they participated in a broad range of educational activities, using the concepts presented in The Inquiring Mind (Houle, 1961) as the basis for his list. It consisted of 16 reasons that were judged to be representative of each of the orientations identified by Houle, plus 10 reasons not assigned to a defined orientation. He then asked 483 adults who were attending educational conferences sponsored by eight American universities to indicate on a five-point scale (never to always) how often each of the reasons influenced their decision to participate. With the help of the principal-component analysis

technique, Sheffield identified five meaningful components, which he called orientations, and named them:

1. Learning orientation--seeking knowledge for its own sake.
2. Desire-activity orientation--taking part because in the circumstances of the learning an interpersonal or social meaning is found that may have no necessary connection at all with the content of the announced purpose of the activity.
3. Personal-goal orientation--participating in education to accomplish fairly clear-cut personal objectives.
4. Societal-goal orientation--participating in education to accomplish clear-cut social or community objectives.
5. Need-activity orientation--taking part because in the circumstances of learning an introspective or intrapersonal meaning is found that may have no necessary connection, and often no connection at all, with the announced purpose of the activity (pp. 68-69).

Burgess (1971), building upon the work of Houle and Sheffield, prepared a list of 70 possible reasons for participation and had the respondents circle one response on a seven-point scale ranging from NEVER to ALWAYS. He collected 1,046 responses from 1,098 respondents. Burgess indicated the respondents were "typically younger than average, were employed in white collar occupations, were married, and had completed more years of education than the average adult." He identified the following reasons for participation:

1. The desire to know
2. The desire to reach a personal goal
3. The desire to reach a social goal

4. The desire to reach a religious goal
5. The desire to escape
6. The desire to take part in an activity
7. The desire to comply with the formal requirements

Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs (1974) conducted a study for the Commission on Non-Traditional Study, often called the CNS study. This study had 1,207 adult learners circle all that applied of 20 alternative reasons for attending a learning activity. This study incorporated the seven factors developed in the Burgess (1971) study and identified two additional factors judged to be important. These two factors were (1) the desire for personal fulfillment and (2) the desire for cultural knowledge. In this study, all of the 1,207 adults surveyed were younger than 65 years of age.

Cross (cited in Peterson, 1980), relying heavily on Burgess (1971), the Ontario study (1976), and the CNS study (1974), developed the following typology of learning motives along with a synthesis of findings from the needs-assessment studies of adults:

1. Desire to achieve practical goals--to get a new job or advance in a current one to improve income.
2. Desire to achieve personal satisfaction and other inner-directed personal goals such as personal development and family well-being.
3. Desire to gain new knowledge, including the desire to learn for its own sake.

4. Desire to achieve formal educational goals, including degrees or certification.

5. Desire to achieve societal goals.

Data from the studies reported give us enough information to state that there are definite patterns of motivation to adult learning. On the basis of the existing data, we can say what kinds of motives prompt adults in general to participate in learning.

Since older adults are underrepresented in studies to determine reasons for participating in organized learning activities, it is important to obtain more information from them in order to fill the gap in this field of education.

When examining the nature of adult participation in learning activities, one must agree with Houle that there are three basic orientations that seem to prevail. These three orientations are learning, goal, and activity (social participation).

Other researchers (Sheffield, Burgess, Peterson, and Cross) have used the same basic three orientations and have factored them into as many as nine orientations. The important clue in all of these studies is the orientations all cluster around Houle's basic three. It is also possible, and very probable, that an adult can participate in organized learning for more than one reason, with no one reason standing out over the rest.

Summary

The literature reviewed contained both nonscientific and highly technical articles pertinent to adult education. Theories

about adult education for the older adult were briefly discussed. Included were (1) work substitution (DeCrow, 1974), (2) new competencies should be gained (McClusky, 1971), (3) expand the use of leisure and help the older adult with the present world (Kidd, 1959), and (4) a philosophical justification for educating older adults incorporating all of the above theories (Moody, 1976).

Four methods of conducting research on reasons for attending organized learning activities were described, and several examples of each method were presented. Since Houle identified and classified basic motivational orientation in 1961, there have been a number of efforts to factor analyze reasons adults give for participating in organized learning activities. A chart on the comparison of five researchers' learning orientations is included in the Appendix. All of the orientations cluster around Houle's basic three: learning oriented, goal oriented, and activity oriented.

In essence, it should be pointed out that older adults set their own goals and needs. The majority of older adults do not view formal education as a means to solve their problems. This may change as more formally educated people become older adults in the future.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between reasons cited by older adults for participating in selected organized learning activities and several independent variables. The secondary purpose is (1) to identify the instructional modes preferred by older adult participants of organized learning activities and (2) to compare the frequencies of reasons cited by older and younger adults for attending organized learning activities, using the CNS (1974) study for comparison purposes when appropriate.

This chapter includes a description of the following: setting for the study, population, sample, questionnaire, data-collecting process, research questions, and the statistical analyses employed.

Setting

This study was conducted in the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area in 1981. Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the state of Michigan and ranks sixty-sixth in size in the United States. There are 1,429 square miles in the standard metropolitan area. Grand Rapids is located in west-central Michigan, 170 miles east of Chicago and 148 miles west of Detroit.

The city of Grand Rapids has a population of 181,602. The 1980 metropolitan population was 601,005, an increase of 61,780

persons since 1970 (Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, 1981). Manufacturing provides 32 percent of the region's employment. Non-manufacturing provides 54 percent and government 14 percent. The Grand Rapids metropolitan area is characterized by a diversified industrial base. Eighty percent of the area's manufacturing firms employ fewer than 50 workers. The Grand Rapids area is not dominated by unions. Five of the 23 manufacturers employing over 500 persons are nonunion. Strikes are rare; the percentage of workers on strike compared to the total labor force has been under 1 percent in any year between 1960 and 1980 (based on the monthly average from data provided by the Michigan Employment Security Commission).

Caucasians make up 92 percent of the population of the metropolitan area. Minority groups included: Black, 4.1 percent; American Indian, .4 percent; Hispanic, 2 percent, and other, 1 percent (Michigan Employment Security Commission).

Higher education is represented by three universities, four colleges, one junior college, and a variety of business and Bible colleges.¹

Greater Grand Rapids is a metropolitan area of approximately one-half million people. It is the county seat of Kent County and retains the flavor of a small town. US-131, north-south artery from the Indiana state line to the south, intersects I-96 near the center

¹ Aquinas College, Baptist College and Seminary, Calvin College, Davenport College of Business, Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids Junior College, Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, Kendall School of Design, Reformed Bible College, and the University Consortium Center representing Grand Valley State College, Western Michigan University, and Michigan State University.

of the city, making it possible to get from one side of town to the other side during the rush hour in less than 20 minutes.

Population

The population studied here included the older adults, 65 years of age and older, who participated in one or more of the organized learning activities in five Grand Rapids area locations.

Sample

The sample was a convenience sample composed of older adults from five different sites of program participation within the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. All of the participants were 65 years of age or older and were enrolled in one or more classes of adult and community education. The five sites of program participation selected for the study were (1) the Jenison Plaza, (2) Caledonia Board of Education building, (3) United Methodist Community House, (4) Grandview apartment complex, and (5) Aquinas Emeritus College.

The ages of 65 and older were chosen for four reasons:

(1) during 1981, more than 20,000 older adults would attend organized learning activities,¹ (2) most studies of adult participants end at the upper age limit of 60 and/or 65, (3) it is the earliest age at which a person can normally retire from the work force and still receive full benefits from the Social Security system, and (4) it is a commonly used point of demarcation in the Census report.

¹This figure was estimated by multiplying the 1980 Michigan Census population figures of 912,321 adults aged 65 and/or older by 2.3 percent, the national participation rate (Peterson et al., 1980).

Jenison Plaza

A class in the Grandville Area Adult Community Education Program was selected by the community education director and invited to participate in the study. The class selected met at the Jenison Plaza. Thirty-one students were in attendance when the investigator presented the questionnaire. Twenty-nine questionnaires were returned; two of the respondents were under the age of 65, and their returns were not used. Twelve of the respondents were high-school graduates, and their information was used in the Personal Enrichment section of the study. The remaining 15 questionnaires' results were tallied into the High School Completion section of the study. The program being studied by the Jenison Plaza respondents was Geography and Local History.

Caledonia Board of Education Building

All of the 25 to 30 participants of the Caledonia Community Adult Education Program were invited to take part in the study. The day the investigator presented the questionnaire to the group, 25 older adults were attending the Things-in-Print program. Of the 25 students, two declined to participate. Twenty-three returned questionnaires; one questionnaire had only a small part of the demographic section completed, and three of the respondents were under the age of 65. The remaining 19 participants who returned questionnaires included three persons who had completed high school and were attending the class for other purposes than to receive a high-school diploma. Those three were counted in the Program Enrichment section of the study.

The remaining 16 respondents were counted in the High School Completion section of the study.

United Methodist Community House

The United Methodist Community House was selected as a source of respondents with limited formal schooling. Because of the previously identified difficulty many of the prospective respondents had with filling out and completing the questionnaire due to reading and writing difficulties, each prospective respondent was invited on a one-to-one basis to participate in a personal interview that included assistance in completing the questionnaire. All of the respondents from the United Methodist Community House were listed in the Adult Basic Education level of the study. In addition to adult basic education, a ceramics and a sewing course were offered, from which respondents were solicited for the study. All of the courses met before or after the noon meal. A monthly fee of seven dollars was being charged for the five meals per week. The respondents were very much concerned about how the Reagan budget cuts would affect them and the meal program. Thirty-two potential respondents were asked to be a part of the study before 20 agreed to be interviewed and to complete the questionnaire.

Grandview Apartment Complex

A physical education class composed of residents of the Grandview apartment complex was selected by the Grand Rapids Community Education staff to participate in the study. When the investigator arrived to present the questionnaire, he was invited to participate

in the exercise program by the instructor and class members. He did so and enjoyed the experience. The group apologized for having only 14 members of the class present; the remaining members of the class were out shopping. All 14 members of the class completed the questionnaire and were counted in the Program Enrichment level of the study.

Aquinas Emeritus College

The Emeritus College program of Aquinas College was selected to represent college-sponsored, fine arts, noncredit-level courses. Two classes were selected by the director of the Emeritus program to participate in the study. The two classes were Sacred Scriptures and Psychology of the Mature Years. Thirty-two questionnaires were distributed to the participants of the two classes, and 22 were returned. Two were completed by persons under the age of 65 years and were not used in the study. The other 20 respondents were counted in the study.

The total number of older adults asked to participate in the study was 134. One hundred eight questionnaires were returned to the investigator. One hundred questionnaires were used in the study. Statistically, this represented an 80.6 percent return of the questionnaires, with 74.7 percent of the respondents who were asked to participate actually being used in the study. Table 1 presents information about the number of participants asked from each area and the number who actually participated. From this point on,

whenever the term "sample" is used, it will refer to the 100 respondents who were used in the study, unless otherwise indicated.

Table 1.--Table of participation.

Area	Number Asked	Chose Not to Participate	Completed Questionnaire	Questionnaire Rejected	Number Participated
Caledonia	25	2	23	4	19
Jenison Plaza	31	2	29	2	27
United Methodist Community House	32	12	20	0	20
Grandview Apartments	14	0	14	0	14
Aquinas Emeritus College	32	10	22	2	20
Totals	134	26	108	8	100
Percent	100%	19.4%	80.6%	5.9%	74.7%

The program level, program sponsor, site of program participation, and number of participants are presented in Appendix A.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to permit a thorough check of the proposed questionnaire and to get feedback from the research subjects and other interested persons involved that would lead to improvement of the main study.

Eight adult participants, a male and female from each level of educational-program participation (Adult Basic Education, High

School Completion, Personal Enrichment, and College-Sponsored, Liberal Arts, Noncredit courses) were selected to complete the questionnaire and to discuss with the investigator their feelings about the questionnaire and older adults participating in organized learning activities. The pilot study was conducted during the last two weeks of September 1981.

Procedural Findings of the Pilot Study

Some of the procedural findings of the pilot study were as follows: (1) the questionnaire was better understood by the respondents when the investigator was present to answer and clarify questions; (2) the questionnaire was too long and complicated for persons with a limited ability to read and write; (3) a large number of the students in the Adult Basic Education program could not read or write and did not know what their annual income had been for the previous year (they did know the amount of their monthly check(s), however; and (4) there was a great reluctance to check a range of approximate income. One person said, "It really isn't worth knowing because I've been retired for more than 20 years." Another respondent stated, "It really isn't any of your business."

Instrument

The instrument used to collect the data to explore the questions in the study was composed of portions of the questionnaire used for the Commission on Non-Traditional Study (CNS), as reported by Cross (1974).

The decision to use part of this questionnaire was made so that comparisons could be made between the responses of the older adults of this study and the younger adults of the CNS study where appropriate. Some modifications were made as follows:

1. The method used to find a potential respondent was changed from one of screening and random selection to one of the investigator presenting the questionnaire to a preselected class session of potential respondents. The pilot study indicated that direct mailing was not feasible because of the lack of reading and writing skills of some of the potential respondents.

2. Because of the focus of the study, not all questions asked in the CNS study were pertinent to this study. Therefore, the number of questions was reduced.

3. A four-point Likert-type scale was developed for the 20 items relating to reasons for attending an activity. This was done to measure the importance attached to a reason as well as the percentage by which each reason was selected by the respondents.

4. The composite questionnaire was then reviewed to improve the readability, flow, and validity of the new instrument. After the review, the questionnaire was given to a group of adult program administrators in the Grand Rapids area. As a result of their input, several changes were made. This included (1) a shorter version being adopted, (2) ambiguous questions being rephrased, and (3) some questions being deleted.

Results of the pilot study were shared with two administrators from the Grand Rapids Junior College who were familiar with

working with minority members of adult education programs and three members of the guidance committee. One question was deleted, and several questions had minor phraseology changes made to them. The resulting questionnaire was then deemed satisfactory and was distributed by the investigator to the respondents of the study. A copy of the questionnaire used in the study is in the Appendix.

Data-Collection Process

Data for the study were collected during the fall of 1981. That time was chosen because more of the older adults were taking part in programs during that time period than during the summer months. The investigator visited each class. During these visitations, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. Included with each questionnaire was a cover letter signed by the director of one of the programs. An information sheet was also included (see Appendix B). A number was assigned to each questionnaire as it was returned to the investigator.

Information from each questionnaire was transferred to a data coding form by the investigator and key punched onto data cards and verified by the Michigan State University Laboratory Center so that the appropriate data analysis could be made.

Restatement of Research Questions

The following research questions were explored:

1. How important to the respondents are the reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity?

2. Do reasons cited by older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

3. How important to the respondents are the preferences cited for the instructional modes?

4. Do preferences cited for modes of learning by older adult participants of organized learning activities differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

5. How do reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized learning activity in this study compare with the reasons cited by younger adult participants (using the CNS study reported by Cross [1974] for comparison purposes where appropriate)?

Statistical Analysis

The following statistical analyses were used in the study. The chi-square for goodness of fit was used at the .05 test level to determine if reasons cited by older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity differed significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics and to determine if preferences cited for three instructional modes of learning by the respondents differed significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics.

The expected chi-squares of the dependent variables for comparison with the independent variables were obtained by using the responses of the entire sample. The number of respondents (N)

answering each question may vary because not all of the respondents answered every question.

The percentage of selection was used to rank items in the order of preference, to compare items in this study with the same items selected by younger adults in the CNS study, and to determine the importance of the various modes of learning.

Limitations of the Study

This study was designed to explore the relationships between reasons cited by older adult participants in organized learning activities and selected independent variables. It was a descriptive study, indicating differences that were significant and not significant between groups within levels of education attained, levels of educational program participation, age levels, and sites of program participation. Descriptive studies do not establish cause-effect relationships between variables. This study identifies significant differences that seem to exist between groups within independent variables.

The subjects belonged to a convenience sample of a discrete population of older adult participants enrolled in organized learning activities in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, area in the fall of 1981. Because of the uniqueness of the sample, generalizing to older adult participants of organized learning activities in the United States is not appropriate.

Summary

In summation, this chapter provided a description of the development of the study's methods and procedures. The population sample was obtained from the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. It was a convenience sample chosen to assure the representation from specific sites of program participation.

The questionnaire was developed from a much larger questionnaire used for the CNS study (1972). Modifications were made by the investigator with the assistance of the guidance committee and other interested individuals, including a representative from the Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University. Results of the pilot study and the procedural findings were included in this chapter.

The statistical procedures were determined with the aid of a research consultant from the Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University. Because of the uniqueness of the sample, generalizing to older adult participants of organized learning activities in the United States is not appropriate. The study reflects the responses given by the 100 respondents at the time they completed the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine relationships between reasons cited by older adult participants in organized learning activities and four independent variables: (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of educational program participation, and (4) sites of program participation. In addition, preferences older adult participants have for three selected modes of learning were examined: (1) how a learning activity is conducted, (2) time schedule of the activity, and (3) frequency of an activity. Reasons cited by older adults (in this study) and younger adults (CNS study) for attending an organized learning activity were also compared.

The sample population was composed of 100 older adult participants of organized learning activities who were enrolled in adult education programs in the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area during the fall of 1981. Respondents were from five sites of program participation. Since a randomly selected sample was not used, generalizations from this study to older adult learners are not appropriate.

The instrument used in the study was a modified form of a questionnaire used previously in a study for the Commission of

Non-Traditional Study by Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs as reported by Cross (1974). The decision to use this type of questionnaire was made so that comparisons could be made between responses of the two studies when appropriate.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

How important to the respondents are the reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity?

Twenty reasons for attending an organized learning activity were examined in the study. The importance of each reason was determined by the percentage with which the respondents selected each reason. ALWAYS, USUALLY, and SELDOM responses were considered to be YES answers, and a NEVER response was considered to be a NO answer when determining the percentage by which each item was cited. The higher the percentage by which an item was selected, the higher the rank that respective item received. All items cited by 90 percent or more of the respondents were considered to be an important reason for attending an organized learning activity.

Analysis.--Table 2 presents the 20 reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity. They were ranked according to the highest percentage of selection. Table 3 presents the responses each of the 20 items received, according to being cited as ALWAYS, USUALLY, SELDOM, or NEVER as a reason for attending an organized learning activity.

Table 2.--Twenty reasons for attending an organized learning activity, ranked by percentage of selection (N = 100).

Item #	Reason	Percent	Rank
3	To become better informed, personal enjoyment, and enrichment.	96.9	1
4	To meet new people.	96.0	2
17	To become a happier person.	94.9	3
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	93.9	4
13	To become a more effective citizen.	93.7	5
15	To feel a sense of belonging.	91.6	6
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	89.7	7
10	To improve my spiritual well-being.	82.7	8
11	To better understand community problems.	77.7	9
14	To learn about my own culture or background.	66.3	10
9	To be better able to serve my church.	63.0	11
20	To get away from personal problems.	58.4	12
19	To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	50.0	13
5	To be a better parent, husband or wife.	31.9	14
6	To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	31.2	15
8	To work towards certification or licensing.	10.8	16
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	9.7	17
1	To help to get a new job.	7.2	18
2	To help to advance in present job.	5.3	19
18	To work towards a degree.	3.4	20

Note: ALWAYS, USUALLY, and SELDOM answers were counted as a "YES" response when computing the percentage of selection.

Table 3.--Percentage of ALWAYS, USUALLY, SELDOM, and NEVER responses received by each of the 20 reasons for attending an organized learning activity.

Item #	Reason	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	Total %	N
1	To help to get a new job.	0.0	2.1	5.2	92.7	100.0	97
2	To help to advance in present job.	2.1	2.1	1.1	94.7	100.0	95
3	To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	68.0	21.7	7.2	3.1	100.0	97
4	To meet new people.	65.0	28.0	3.0	4.0	100.0	100
5	To be a better parent, husband or wife.	16.5	7.7	7.7	68.1	100.0	91
6	To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	10.8	9.6	10.8	68.8	100.0	93
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	39.2	43.3	7.2	10.3	100.0	97
8	To work towards certification or licensing.	1.1	2.2	7.6	89.1	100.0	93
9	To be better able to serve my church.	23.9	23.9	15.2	37.0	100.0	92
10	To improve my spiritual well-being.	42.3	28.9	11.3	17.5	100.0	97
11	To better understand community problems.	37.9	24.2	15.8	22.1	100.0	95
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	4.3	4.3	1.0	90.4	100.0	93
13	To become a more effective citizen.	51.0	24.0	16.6	8.4	100.0	96
14	To learn about my own culture or background.	35.9	20.7	9.8	33.6	100.0	92
15	To feel a sense of belonging.	52.7	36.9	2.0	8.4	100.0	95
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	61.1	23.5	9.2	6.2	100.0	98
17	To become a happier person.	67.4	26.5	1.0	5.1	100.0	98
18	To work towards a degree.	1.1	1.1	1.1	96.7	100.0	93
19	To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	19.6	16.3	14.1	50.0	100.0	92
20	To get away from personal problems.	24.7	14.6	19.1	41.6	100.0	89

Summary.--The independent variable, sites of program participation, was the one selected to study when summarizing the most important reasons for attending an organized learning activity that were cited by the respondents of the study. This decision was made because of the great deal of overlapping of the independent variables and also because more significant differences (eight) occurred within the groups in this independent variable than in all of the other independent variables combined.

Most important reasons determined by sites of program participation: The reasons listed under the five headings representing the sites of program participation groups were considered to be the most important as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. Each reason listed was cited by more than 90 percent of the respondents of the identified group. Each reason identified by an asterisk (*) was cited by 100 percent of the respondents from the group being reported.

Jenison Plaza

*Item 17: To become a happier person.

*Item 4: To meet new people.

*Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Item 15: To feel a sense of belonging.

Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.

Item 7: To get away from the routine of daily living.

Item 16: Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.

Caledonia

- *Item 17: To become a happier person.
- *Item 4: To meet new people.
- *Item 16: Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.
- Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.
- Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.

Grandview Apartments

No item was cited by more than 85.7 percent of the respondents from the Grandview Apartments as a reason for attending an organized learning activity.

United Methodist Community House

- *Item 4: To meet new people.
- *Item 17: To become a happier person.
- *Item 7: To get away from the routine of daily living.
- *Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.
- *Item 10: To improve my spiritual well-being.
- Item 15: To feel a sense of belonging.
- Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.
- Item 16: Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.

Aquinas Emeritus College

- *Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.
- *Item 16: Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.
- Item 4: To meet new people.

Item 7: To get away from the routine.

Item 15: To feel a sense of belonging.

Item 10: To improve my spiritual well-being.

Reasons considered most important: Reasons considered to be the most important for attending an organized learning activity were those items cited by more than 90 percent of the respondents. The following six reasons for attending an organized learning activity meeting the above criterion are listed in order of importance:

Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Item 17: To become a happier person.

Item 4: To meet new people.

Item 16: Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.

Item 15: To feel a sense of belonging.

Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.

Reasons considered least important: Reasons considered to be of least importance were those items cited by less than 8 percent of the respondents. The following three items were considered least important by the respondents as a reason for attending an organized learning activity:

Item 18: To attain a degree.

Item 1: To help to get a job.

Item 2: To help to advance in present job.

Discussion.--The respondents of the study indicated that the reasons most important to them for attending an organized learning

activity were learning and activity (social-participation) oriented, when factored into Houle's three orientations. This finding is contrary to the findings that were made by Houle (1973) and McKee (1972) in studies relating to reasons adults gave for attending organized learning activities. In those two studies, the goal-orientation reasons were the strongest, followed by the learning orientation. Activity or social-participation reasons were considered to be least important in Houle's and McKee's studies.

The reason for the activity (social-participation) orientation being so strong in this study was not identified. There are several factors, or combinations of factors, that could influence the findings of this study. Some of the factors are:

1. The ages of the respondents
2. The location of the program sites
3. The subject matter being taught
4. The instructor(s) teaching the subject matter
5. Past experiences in adult education
6. Where the participant lived
7. Whether or not the educational program is built around another activity (meals)
8. Whether or not transportation is provided
9. Activities other than the subject matter that encourage participation
10. The percentage of single respondents

The reasons cited by the respondents as least important were goal oriented. The study demonstrated that the learning orientation

is very strong and that meeting new people and socially interacting with people are very important educational motivations for many older adult learners.

Research Question 2

Do reasons cited by older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

Research Question 2 was explored by using the chi-square test at the .05 level to determine whether the frequency of responses from groups within the four independent variables differed significantly from each other. The independent variables were (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of educational program participation, and (4) sites of program participation.

Table 4 presents the chi-square and point of significance for each of the 20 items listed under Question 10 on the questionnaire (Appendix C). Each point of significance less than .05 is identified with an asterisk (*) so that the particular item is easier to recognize.

Analysis.--No significant differences occurred within the independent variables of age levels or levels of formal education attained. Significant differences occurred eight times within the sites of program participation and three times within the levels of educational program participation.

Table 4.--Chi square (χ^2) and point of significance (P) of the items studied in Research Question 2.

Item	Age		Education		Program		Site	
	χ^2	P	χ^2	P	χ^2	P	χ^2	P
1. To help get a new job.	6.892	.1417	7.242	.7024	4.734	.5783	5.755	.6746
2. To help to advance in present job.	4.383	.6250	21.024	.1361	11.202	.2621	18.196	.1099
3. To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	3.561	.7358	20.923	.1393	14.981	.0914	21.686	.0412*
4. To meet new people.	5.156	.5239	14.808	.4653	15.910	.0688	24.993	.0149*
5. To be a better parent, husband or wife.	9.660	.1399	13.420	.5698	11.401	.2492	10.934	.5345
6. To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	2.046	.9154	10.996	.7529	8.387	.4956	27.915	.0057*
7. To get away from the routine of daily living.	3.813	.7019	17.066	.3149	15.721	.0729	22.226	.0351*
8. To work towards certification or licensing.	5.023	.5409	9.943	.8233	11.081	.2702	19.908	.0688
9. To be better able to serve my church.	3.992	.6777	11.058	.7484	23.019	.0062*	26.706	.0085*
10. To improve my spiritual well-being.	.248	.6615	11.495	.7167	17.623	.0398*	25.084	.0144*
11. To better understand community problems.	7.830	.2508	17.360	.2978	10.600	.3041	16.488	.1699
12. To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	5.224	.5154	12.786	.6188	7.050	.6319	10.276	.5917
13. To become a more effective citizen.	10.395	.1089	18.535	.2356	22.871	.0065*	27.870	.0058*
14. To learn about my own culture or background.	.683	.9948	12.421	.6469	7.519	.5832	12.399	.4142
15. To feel a sense of belonging.	3.098	.7964	18.120	.2564	6.178	.7219	9.104	.6940
16. Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	3.006	.8080	12.760	.6208	14.510	.1053	15.640	.2083
17. To become a happier person.	7.429	.2829	12.716	.6243	13.903	.1256	21.277	.0465*
18. To work towards a degree.	6.068	.4156	11.367	.7261	9.156	.4229	14.097	.2945
19. To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	10.685	.0985	12.863	.6128	11.972	.2149	6.275	.9016
20. To get away from personal problems.	5.597	.4698	11.240	.7354	4.974	.8365	10.129	.6046

*Indicates a point of significance of less than .05 level, meaning a significant difference has occurred in this characteristic.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 present data on reasons for attending an organized learning activity in which significant differences occurred in the independent variable of levels of educational program participation.

Tables 8 through 15 present data on reasons for attending an organized learning activity in which significant differences occurred in the independent variable of sites of program participation.

Three questions had significant differences occur in the responses given to them by both the sites of program participation and levels of educational program participation groups. The three questions were Item 9: to be better able to serve my church, Item 10: to improve my spiritual well-being, and Item 13: to become a more effective citizen.

Table 5: Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the four levels of educational program participation groups: Item 9.

Item 9: To be better able to serve my church.					
Program Level	Number and Percentages of Responses Cited				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	3 16.7	5 27.8	2 11.1	8 44.4	18 100.0
High School Completion	7 24.1	10 34.5	1 3.4	11 37.9	29 100.0
Adult Basic Education	6 30.0	2 10.0	9 45.0	3 15.0	20 100.0
Personal Enrichment	6 24.0	5 20.0	2 8.0	12 48.0	25 100.0
Column totals	22 23.9	22 23.9	14 15.2	34 37.0	92 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 9 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was NEVER, selected by 37 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between levels of educational program participation groups in citing NEVER as a reason for this item occurred between the Adult Basic Education and Personal Enrichment groups, with a percentage of selection of 15 and 48 percent, respectively. The Adult Basic Education group gave Item 9 the most support from the levels of educational program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was recorded by the Personal Enrichment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 6.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the four levels of educational program participation groups: Item 10.

Item 10: To improve my spiritual well-being.					
Program Level	Number and Percentages of Responses Cited				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	12 60.0	5 25.0	1 5.0	2 10.0	20 100.0
High School Completion	12 40.0	9 30.0	1 3.3	8 26.7	30 100.0
Adult Basic Education	7 35.0	7 35.0	6 30.0	0 0	20 100.0
Personal Enrichment	10 37.0	7 25.9	3 11.1	7 25.9	27 100.0
Column totals	41 42.3	28 28.9	11 11.3	17 17.5	97 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 10 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 42.3 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between levels of educational program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the College and Adult Basic Education groups, with a percentage of selection of 60 and 35 percent, respectively. The College group gave Item 10 the most support from the levels of educational program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was recorded by the High School Completion group with their response of NEVER.

Table 7.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the four levels of educational program participation groups: Item 13.

Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.					
Program Level	Number and Percentages of Responses Cited				TOTALS
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	
Aquinas Emeritus College	8 47.1	5 29.4	2 11.8	2 11.8	17 100.0
High School Completion	18 58.1	9 29.0	4 12.9	0 0	31 100.0
Adult Basic Education	6 30.0	4 20.0	9 45.0	1 5.0	20 100.0
Personal Enrichment	17 60.7	5 17.9	1 3.6	5 17.9	28 100.0
Column totals	49 51.0	23 24.0	16 16.7	8 8.3	96 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 13 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 51 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between levels of educational program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for Item 13 occurred between the Personal Enrichment and Adult Basic Education groups, with a percentage of selection of 60.7 and 30 percent, respectively. The Personal Enrichment group gave Item 13 the most support from the levels of educational program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was also recorded by the Personal Enrichment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 8.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 6.

Item 6: To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				TOTALS
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	
Aquinas Emeritus College	1 5.6	1 5.6	2 11.1	14 77.8	18 100.0
Jenison Plaza	1 4.3	0 0	4 17.4	18 78.3	23 100.0
Caledonia	7 36.8	4 21.1	2 10.5	6 31.6	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	1 7.7	2 15.4	1 7.7	9 69.2	13 100.0
United Methodist Community House	0 0	2 10.0	1 5.0	17 85.0	20 100.0
Column totals	10 10.8	9 9.7	10 10.8	64 68.8	93 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 6 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was NEVER, selected by 68.8 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing NEVER as a reason for this item occurred between the United Methodist Community House and the Caledonia groups, with a percentage of selection of 85 and 31.6 percent, respectively. The Caledonia group gave Item 6 the most support from the sites of program participation groups, with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support was recorded by the United Methodist Community House group with their response of NEVER.

Table 9.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 9.

Item 9: To be better able to serve my church.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	3 16.7	5 27.8	2 11.1	8 44.4	18 100.0
Jenison Plaza	5 21.7	7 30.4	2 8.7	9 39.1	23 100.0
Caledonia	3 15.8	7 36.8	1 5.3	8 42.1	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	5 41.7	1 8.3	0 0	6 50.0	12 100.0
United Methodist Community House	6 30.6	2 10.0	9 45.0	3 15.0	20 100.0
Column totals	22 23.9	22 23.9	14 15.2	34 37.0	92 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 9 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was NEVER, selected by 37 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing NEVER as a reason for this item occurred between the Grandview Apartment and the United Methodist Community House groups, with a percentage of selection of 50 and 15 percent, respectively. The Grandview Apartment group gave Item 9 the most support from any of the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was also recorded by the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 10.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 10.

Item 10: To improve my spiritual well-being.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	12 60.0	5 25.0	1 5.0	2 10.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	10 41.7	7 29.2	3 12.5	4 16.7	24 100.0
Caledonia	5 26.3	8 42.1	0 0	6 31.6	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	7 50.0	1 7.1	1 7.1	5 35.7	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	7 35.0	7 35.0	6 30.0	0 0	20 100.0
Column totals	41 42.3	28 28.9	11 11.3	17 17.5	97 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 10 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 42.3 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the Caledonia and Aquinas Emeritus College groups, with a percentage of selection of 60 and 26.3 percent, respectively. The Aquinas Emeritus College group gave Item 10 the most support from the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was from the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 11.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 3.

Item 3: To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				TOTALS
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	
Aquinas Emeritus College	17 89.5	2 10.5	0 0	0 0	19 100.0
Jenison Plaza	18 69.2	6 23.1	2 7.7	0 0	26 100.0
Caledonia	14 73.7	3 15.8	1 5.3	1 5.3	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	8 61.5	3 23.1	0 0	2 15.4	13 100.0
United Methodist Community House	9 45.0	7 35.0	4 20.0	0 0	20 100.0
Column totals	66 68.0	21 21.6	7 7.2	3 3.1	97 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 3 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 68 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the Aquinas Emeritus College and the United Methodist Community House groups, with a percentage of 89.5 and 45 percent, respectively. The Aquinas Emeritus College group gave Item 3 the most support from the site of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least support given this item was from the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 12.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 4.

Item 4: To meet new people.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	11 55.0	8 40.0	0 0	1 5.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	18 66.7	8 29.6	1 3.7	0 0	27 100.0
Caledonia	15 78.9	4 21.1	0 0	0 0	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	6 42.9	3 21.4	2 14.3	3 21.4	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	15 75.0	5 25.0	0 0	0 0	20 100.0
Column totals	65 65.0	28 28.0	3 3.0	4 4.0	100 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 4 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 65 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the Caledonia and the Grandview Apartment groups, with a percentage of selection of 78.9 and 42.9 percent, respectively. The Caledonia group gave Item 4 the most support from the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least amount of support for this item was from the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 13.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 7.

Item 7: To get away from the routine of daily living.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				TOTALS
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	
Aquinas Emeritus College	4 21.4	13 68.4	1 5.3	1 5.3	19 100.0
Jenison Plaza	13 52.0	9 36.0	1 4.0	2 8.0	25 100.0
Caledonia	7 36.8	8 42.1	2 10.5	2 10.5	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	6 42.9	3 21.4	0 0	5 35.7	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	8 40.0	9 45.0	3 15.0	0 0	20 100.0
Column totals	38 39.2	42 43.3	7 7.2	10 10.3	97 100.0

The most frequent reason cited in response to Item 7 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was USUALLY, selected by 43.3 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing USUALLY as a reason for this item occurred between the Aquinas Emeritus College and the Grandview Apartment groups, with a percentage of selection of 68.4 and 21.4 percent, respectively. The Jenison Plaza group gave Item 7 the most support from the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least support given this item was by the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 14.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 13.

Item 13: To become a more effective citizen.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				TOTALS
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	
Aquinas Emeritus College	8 47.1	5 29.4	2 11.8	2 11.8	17 100.0
Jenison Plaza	15 57.7	7 26.9	3 11.5	1 3.8	26 100.0
Caledonia	11 57.9	6 31.6	2 10.5	0 0	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	9 64.3	1 7.1	0 0	4 28.6	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	6 30.0	4 20.0	9 45.0	1 5.0	20 100.0
Column totals	49 51.0	23 24.0	16 16.7	8 8.3	96 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 13 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 51 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the Grandview Apartment and the United Methodist Community House groups, with a percentage of selection of 64.3 and 30.0 percent, respectively. The Grandview Apartment group gave Item 13 the most support from the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least support given this item was also by the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Table 15.--Data on responses given to a reason for attending an organized learning activity by the five sites of program participation groups: Item 17.

Item 17: To become a happier person.					
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses Given				
	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	12 63.2	5 26.3	0 0	2 10.5	19 100.0
Jenison Plaza	17 65.4	9 34.6	0 0	0 0	26 100.0
Caledonia	17 89.5	2 10.5	0 0	0 0	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	6 42.9	5 35.7	0 0	3 21.4	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	14 70.0	5 25.0	1 5.0	0 0	20 100.0
Column totals	66 67.3	26 26.5	1 1.0	5 5.1	98 100.0

The most frequent answer cited in response to Item 17 as a reason for attending an organized learning activity was ALWAYS, selected by 67.3 percent of the respondents. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups citing ALWAYS as a reason for this item occurred between the Caledonia and the Grandview Apartment groups, with a percentage of selection of 89.5 and 42.9 percent, respectively. The Caledonia group gave Item 17 the most support from the sites of program participation groups with ALWAYS as a reason for attending an organized learning activity. The least support given this item was from the Grandview Apartment group with their response of NEVER.

Summary.--In the sample studied, groups within two of the four selected independent variables differed significantly in their responses to the items on the study's questionnaire related to reasons for participating in an organized learning activity (Question 10 on the questionnaire; Appendix C). The two independent variables in which significant differences occurred were levels of educational program participation and sites of program participation.

Sites of program participation: Sites of program participation groups differed the most frequently in their responses to the 20 items related to reasons for attending an organized learning activity. Forty percent of the time (8 of 20), the responses given to the 20 items by the five sites of participation groups were significantly different. The factors causing this rate of significant differences were not identified in the study. The Grandview Apartment group was most likely to differ (five times) in their responses to the most frequent answers given to the items in which significant differences occurred.

Levels of educational program participation: The four groups from levels of educational program participation responded to three items in a manner that resulted in a significant difference occurring. The High School Completion group gave the greatest support to two of the three items.

Age levels and levels of formal education attained: No significant differences occurred in the responses given to the 20 items of Question 10 of the questionnaire by the respondents from age levels or levels of formal education attained.

Discussion.--Sites of program participation was the independent variable in which most significant differences occurred in responses to reasons for attending an organized learning activity. The cause for this finding was not identified in the study. There are a variety of factors, or combinations of factors, that could be responsible for this finding. The same factors influencing the importance given to the reasons that were identified in Research Question 1 of the study could also be influencing the significant differences found in Research Question 2.

Research Question 3

How important to the respondents are the preferences cited for the modes of learning by older adult participants of organized learning activities?

Three modes of learning were examined in the study. They were: (1) methods of instruction, (2) activity time schedule, and (3) frequency of an activity.

Analysis.--The importance of each item was determined by the percentage by which it was selected by the respondents as their preference for each respective mode of learning. Each respondent was instructed to check the one statement that best described how he/she felt about the item being discussed. Some of the respondents selected more than one item as their choice, and other respondents did not select an item.

Table 16 lists the instructional modes of learning in rank order, as determined by the percentages of preference cited by the respondents for each item.

Table 16.--Modes of learning preferred by older adult participants of organized learning activities (N = 100).

Item #	Methods of Instruction	Percent ^a	Rank
55	Small group (seminar)	43.0	1
54	Lecture and discussion	41.0	2
59	A balance (all are good)	10.0	3
57	Independent study	4.0	4
53	Traditional lecture	4.0	4
56	Laboratory or shop	2.0	6
b			
<u>Activity Time Schedule</u>			
60	Weekday mornings	48.0	1
61	Weekday afternoons	31.0	2
63	Weekday mornings and afternoons	25.0	3
64	Over the noon hour	3.0	4
62	Weekday evenings	1.0	5
65	Saturday/Sunday (weekends)	1.0	5
b			
<u>Frequency of an Activity</u>			
66	Once weekly	43.0	1
67	Twice weekly	31.0	2
68	Three times weekly	13.0	3
70	Five times weekly	11.0	4
69	Four times weekly	1.0	5
b			

^aPercentages do not total 100 because of multiple responses.

^bNo other modes of learning were selected by the respondents.

Table 17 presents the response each of the items received from the respondents from the groups within the sites of program participation.

Summary.--Sites of program participation was selected as the independent variable to study when summarizing the most important preferences for modes of learning. This decision was made because of the great overlapping of the independent variables and also because more significant differences (five) occurred within the groups in this independent variable than in all of the other independent variables combined (three).

Most important preferences of sites of program participation groups: The following preferences were considered to be the most important for each specific mode of learning by the respondents from each of the five sites of program participation groups. Using the criterion of being cited by 40 percent or more of the respondents of a specific group to be considered as an important mode of learning, the following items were preferred by the identified sites of program participation groups.

1. Jenison Plaza. No method of instruction item was cited by more than 14.8 percent of the respondents from the Jenison Plaza group. "Weekday mornings" and "weekday afternoons" were cited by this group of respondents as important preferences for an activity time schedule. No frequency of an activity item was cited by more than 20 percent of the respondents from the Jenison Plaza group.

Table 17.--Modes of learning preferred by respondents from groups within sites of program participation.

Mode of Learning	All (N=100)	Jenison Plaza (N=27)	Caledonia (N=19)	Grandview Apts. (N=14)	United Methodist Community House (N=20)	Aquinas Emeritus College (N=20)
<u>Methods of Instruction</u>						
Traditional lecture	4.0	3.7	0	0	15.0	0
Lecture & discussion	41.0	14.8	73.7	35.7	45.0	45.0
Small groups (seminar)	43.0	14.8	73.7	42.9	40.0	55.0
Laboratory or shop	2.0	7.4	0	0	0	0
Independent study	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lecture & laboratory	0	0	0	0	0	0
A balance	10.0	18.5	5.3	7.1	5.0	10.0
<u>Activity Time Schedule</u>						
Weekday mornings	43.0	40.7	68.4	71.4	40.0	40.0
Weekday afternoons	31.0	44.4	21.1	7.1	30.0	40.0
Weekday evenings	1.0	0	0	7.1	0	0
Weekdays A.M. & P.M.	25.0	22.2	36.8	7.1	20.0	35.0
Over the noon hour	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Frequency of an Activity</u>						
Once weekly	43.0	18.5	52.6	57.1	35.0	65.0
Twice weekly	31.0	11.1	36.8	28.5	45.0	40.0
Three times weekly	13.0	14.8	5.3	14.3	15.0	15.0
Four times weekly	1.0	0	0	0	5.0	0
Five times weekly	11.0	0	0	0	50.0	5.0
Every other week	0	0	0	0	0	0
Once a month	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Not all of the respondents answered all of the questions, and some selected more than one answer for a mode.

2. Caledonia. Caledonia site respondents cited "lecture & discussion" and "small group (seminar)" as important preferences for a method of instruction. "Weekday mornings" was cited as the important preference for an activity time schedule. "Once weekly" was cited as the important preference for the frequency of an activity.

3. Grandview Apartments. "Small group (seminar)" was cited as an important preference for a method of instruction. "Weekday mornings" was clearly the preferred time for an activity time schedule. "Once weekly" was the preference of the Grandview Apartment respondents for the frequency of an activity.

4. United Methodist Community House. Both "small group (seminar)" and "lecture & discussion" were cited as important preferences for a method of instruction by the respondents from the United Methodist Community House. "Weekday mornings" was cited as the important preference for an activity time schedule. "Five times weekly" and "twice weekly" were both cited by more than 40 percent of the United Methodist Community House group and are both considered to be important preferences as a choice for frequency of an activity.

5. Aquinas Emeritus College. The Aquinas Emeritus College group selected "lecture & discussion" and "small group (seminar)" as their preferred method of instruction. "Weekday mornings" and "weekday afternoons" were both preferred for an activity time schedule. "Once weekly" and "twice weekly" were both preferred for the frequency of an activity by the Aquinas Emeritus College group.

Most important preferences: Preferences considered to be the most important for each specific mode of learning were those

items cited by 40 percent or more of the respondents. The following items of preference met the criterion and are listed under the respective mode of learning.

1. Methods of instruction. The two items that were considered to be the most important preferences as to methods of instruction were "small group (seminar)" and "lecture & discussion." Both of these items were cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents of the study.

2. Activity time schedule. "Weekday mornings" was the only item cited by at least 40 percent of the respondents and therefore is considered to be the time period that the older adults in this study preferred for a scheduled organized learning activity.

Least important preferences: Preferences for a mode of learning considered to be least important to the respondents were those cited by less than 5 percent of the respondents. The following items were in the least important category for the respective modes of learning.

1. Methods of instruction least preferred. The methods of instruction least preferred by the respondents were "independent study," "traditional lecture," "lecture and laboratory," and "laboratory or shop."

2. Activity time schedule least preferred. The activity time schedule items least preferred were "over the noon hour," "weekday evenings," and "Saturday/Sunday (weekends)."

3. Frequency of an activity. The frequencies of an activity least preferred by the respondents of the study were: "four times weekly," "every other week," and "once a month."

Important preferences in other independent variables: Age levels, levels of formal education attained, and levels of educational program participation had no significant differences occur in items considered to be important preferences within their respective groups.

Discussion.--The groups within the independent variables generally agreed with each other on items considered to be important as preferred modes of learning. The one group in which the greatest exception to the general preference was the Adult Basic Education or United Methodist Community House group. The exception took place in the preference for the frequency of an activity. The entire sample cited "once weekly" by a percentage of 43. The next closest preference was "twice weekly," at 31 percent.

The United Methodist Community House, the same group as Adult Basic Education, cited "once weekly" by 35 percent and "five times weekly" by 50 percent. Only one other respondent (from the Aquinas Emeritus group) also cited "five times weekly."

The study did not address itself to this finding. There are several factors, or combinations of factors, related to the United Methodist Community House group that are different from the other groups and might have caused this difference. They are:

1. This group had the largest percentage of nonwhite respondents of all of the groups.

2. The main meal of the day (noon) was served to the respondents.
3. This group had the lowest annual income of all the groups.
4. The site of participation was the center of social activities for the majority of the respondents from that group.
5. This group had the least amount of formal education.
6. Ninety-five percent of this group had had semi- or unskilled jobs.
7. One hundred percent of this group were widowed or divorced.

Research Question 4

Do preferences cited for modes of learning by older adult participants of organized learning activities differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

Research Question 4 was explored by using the chi-square test at the .05 level to determine whether the frequency of responses from groups within the four independent variables differed significantly from each other. The independent variables were (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of educational program participation, and (4) sites of program participation.

Table 18 presents the chi-square and point of significance for each of the items listed under Questions 13, 14, and 15 on the questionnaire (Appendix C). Each point of significance of less than .05 is identified with an asterisk (*) so that the particular item is easier to recognize.

Table 18.--Raw chi-square scores and points of significance of modes of learning.

Mode of Learning	Age		Education		Program		Site	
	χ^2	P	χ^2	P	χ^2	P	χ^2	P
<u>Methods of Instruction</u>								
53. Traditional lecture	.6257	.7314	3.0671	.3814	8.3921	.0386*	8.5165	.0744
54. Lecture & discussion	.2687	.8743	1.8924	.5950	.7849	.8531	16.4700	.0024*
55. Small group (seminar)	.2118	.1060	1.2149	.7494	2.1658	.5387	17.2982	.0017*
56. Laboratory or shop	.9708	.6154	1.4172	.7015	1.3643	.7139	5.5177	.2382
57. Independent study	1.9820	.3712	1.5846	.8115	5.2173	.1566	13.8764	.0077*
58. Lecture & laboratory	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
59. A balance	1.1188	.5715	1.5555	.6695	1.0227	.7958	3.3331	.5037
<u>Activity Time Schedule</u>								
60. Weekday mornings	1.2865	.5256	4.3180	.2291	5.0003	.1718	9.9321	.0416*
61. Weekday afternoons	4.6802	.0963	3.5946	.3087	4.1946	.2412	7.6529	.1052
62. Weekday evenings	2.1464	.3419	1.7957	.6159	2.4730	.4802	6.2049	.1844
63. Weekday A.M. & P.M.	.9259	.6294	1.4163	.7017	1.6314	.6523	5.2464	.2629
64. Over noon hour	.0095	.9952	.1909	.9790	1.5286	.6757	2.7982	.5921
65. Saturdays & Sundays	2.1464	.3419	3.0303	.3870	4.0404	.2571	4.0404	.4006
<u>Frequency of an Activity</u>								
66. Once weekly	4.5741	.1016	.4941	.9202	7.5301	.0568	8.4379	.0768
67. Twice weekly	7.9917	.0184*	2.4726	.4803	6.9754	.0727	9.3400	.0531
68. Three times weekly	2.0655	.3560	4.6395	.3263	1.7780	.6197	4.8951	.2982
69. Four times weekly	1.7957	.4074	1.7957	.6159	4.0404	.2571	4.0400	.4006
70. Five times weekly	3.9907	.1360	4.5057	.2118	39.7237	.0000*	39.2237	.0000*
71. Every other week	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
72. Once a month	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

*Indicates a point of significance of less than the .05 test level.

Analysis.--No significant differences occurred within the independent variable of levels of formal education attained. Significant differences occurred five times within the independent variable of sites of program participation, two times within levels of educational program participation, and one time in age-level groups.

Table 19 presents data on preferences for a mode of learning in which significant differences occurred in the independent variable of age levels.

Tables 20 and 21 present data on preferences for a mode of learning in which significant differences occurred in the independent variable of levels of educational program participation.

Tables 22 through 26 present data on preferences for a mode of learning in which significant differences occurred in the independent variable of sites of program participation.

One question had significant differences occur in the responses given to it by both the sites of program participation and levels of educational program participation groups. The item was "five times weekly" in response to the preferred frequency of an activity.

Table 19.--Data on modes of learning: frequency of an activity preferred by age groups.

Question: How often do you like to attend a learning activity?			
Item 67: Twice weekly.			
Age Groups	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
65-69	13 36.1	23 63.9	20 100.0
70-74	14 43.8	18 56.3	32 100.0
75-up	4 12.5	28 87.5	32 100.0
Column total	31 31.0	69 69.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "twice weekly" as their choice of "How often do you like to attend a learning activity?" 31 percent of the time. The 70-74-year-old group had the greatest difference in their response to Item 67, with 43.8 percent favoring and 56.3 percent against. The greatest difference between the three age groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the 70-74 age group and the 75-up group, with a percentage of selection of 43.8 and 12.5 percent, respectively.

Table 20.--Data on modes of learning: method of instruction preferred by levels of educational program participation groups.

Question: How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?			
Item 53: Traditional lecture.			
Program Level	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
College	0 0	20 100.0	20 100.0
High school completion	1 3.2	30 96.8	31 100.0
Adult basic education	3 15.0	17 85.0	20 100.0
Personal enrichment	0 0	29 100.0	29 100.0
Column total	4 4.0	96 96.0	100 100.0

The respondents selected "traditional lectures" as their choice of "How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?" only 4 percent of the time. The Adult Basic Education group had the greatest difference in their response to Item 53, with 15 percent favoring and 85 percent against. The greatest difference between levels of educational program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Adult Basic Education group and the College and Personal Enrichment groups, with a percentage of selection of 15 and 0 percent, respectively.

Table 21.--Data on modes of learning: frequency of an activity preferred by levels of educational program participation groups.

Question: How often do you like to attend a learning activity?			
Item 70: Five times weekly.			
Program Level	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
College	1 5.0	19 95.0	20 100.0
High school completion	0 0	31 100.0	31 100.0
Adult basic education	10 50.0	10 50.0	20 100.0
Personal enrichment	0 0	29 29.0	29 100.0
Column total	11 11.0	89 89.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "five times weekly" as their choice of "How often do you like to attend a learning activity?" 11 percent of the time. The Adult Basic Education group had the greatest difference in their response to Item 70, with 50 percent favoring and 50 percent against. The greatest difference between levels of educational program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Adult Basic Education group and the High School Completion and Personal Enrichment groups, with a percentage of selection of 50 and 0 percent, respectively.

Table 22.--Data on modes of learning: methods of instruction preferred by sites of program participation groups.

Question: How often do you like to attend a learning activity?			
Item 54: Lecture and discussion.			
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	9 45.0	11 55.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	4 14.8	23 85.2	27 100.0
Caledonia	14 73.7	5 26.3	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	5 35.7	9 64.3	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	9 45.0	11 55.0	20 100.0
Column total	41 41.0	59 59.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "lecture and discussion" as their choice of "How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?" 41 percent of the time. The Aquinas Emeritus College and United Methodist Community House groups had the greatest difference in their response to Item 54, with 45 percent favoring and 55 percent against. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Caledonia and Jenison Plaza groups with a percentage of selection of 73.7 and 14 percent, respectively.

Table 23.--Data on modes of learning: methods of instruction preferred by sites of program participation groups.

Question: How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?

Item 55: Small group (seminar).

Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	11 55.0	9 45.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	4 14.8	23 85.2	27 100.0
Caledonia	14 73.7	5 26.3	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	6 42.9	8 51.7	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	8 40.0	12 60.0	20 100.0
Column total	43 43.0	57 57.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "small group (seminar)" as their choice of "How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?" 43 percent of the time. The Aquinas Emeritus College and United Methodist Community House groups had the greatest difference in their response to Item 55, with 55 percent favoring and 45 percent against. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Caledonia and Jenison Plaza groups, with a percentage of selection of 14.8 and 85.2 percent, respectively.

Table 24.--Data on modes of learning: methods of instruction preferred by program participation groups.

Question: How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?			
Item 57: Independent study.			
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	0 0	20 100.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	0 0	27 100.0	27 100.0
Caledonia	0 0	19 100.0	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	3 21.4	11 78.6	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	1 5.0	19 95.0	20 100.0
Column total	4 4.0	96 96.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "independent study" as their choice of "How do you like to have a learning activity conducted?" 4 percent of the time. The Grandview Apartments group had the greatest difference in their response to Item 57, with 21.4 percent favoring and 78.6 percent against. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Grandview Apartments group and the Aquinas Emeritus College, Jenison Plaza, and Caledonia groups, with percentages of selection of 21.4 and 0 percent, respectively.

Table 25.--Data on modes of learning: activity time schedule preferred by sites of program participation groups.

Question: Which time schedule for a learning activity do you like best?			
Item 60: Weekday morning activities.			
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	6 30.0	14 70.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	11 40.7	16 59.3	27 100.0
Caledonia	13 68.4	6 31.6	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	10 71.4	4 28.6	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	8 40.0	12 60.0	20 100.0
Column total	48 48.0	52 52.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "weekday morning activities" as their choice of a time schedule for a learning activity 48 percent of the time. The Jenison Plaza group had the greatest difference in their response to Item 60, with 40.7 percent favoring and 59.3 percent against. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the Grandview Apartments group and the Aquinas Emeritus College group, with a percentage of selection of 71.4 and 30 percent, respectively.

Table 26.--Data on modes of learning: frequency of an activity preferred by sites of program participation groups.

Question: How often do you like to attend a learning activity?			
Item 70: Five times weekly.			
Program Site	Number and Percentages of Responses		
	YES	NO	TOTALS
Aquinas Emeritus College	1 5.0	19 95.0	20 100.0
Jenison Plaza	0 0	27 100.0	27 100.0
Caledonia	0 0	19 100.0	19 100.0
Grandview Apartments	0 0	14 100.0	14 100.0
United Methodist Community House	10 50.0	10 50.0	20 100.0
Column total	11 11.0	89 89.0	100 100.0

The respondents cited "five times weekly" as their choice of "How often do you like to attend a learning activity?" 11 percent of the time. The United Methodist Community House had the greatest difference in their response to Item 70, with 50 percent favoring and 50 percent against. The greatest difference between sites of program participation groups in citing YES for this item occurred between the United Methodist Community House group and groups from the Jenison Plaza, Caledonia, and Grandview Apartments, with percentages of selection of 50 and 0 percent, respectively.

Summary.--

Significant differences within: In the samples studied, groups within three of the four selected independent variables had significant differences occur in their response to the items on the questionnaire related to preferences for three modes of learning. These three modes of learning were (1) methods of instruction, (2) activity time schedule, and (3) frequency of an activity.

Sites of program participation: Sites of program participation groups had significant differences occur five times in their response to preferences of modes of learning. These significant differences occurred three times in response to preferences for methods of instruction and once each in response to preferences for an activity time schedule and frequency of an activity.

Levels of educational program participation: Levels of educational program participation groups had significant differences occur two times in their response to preferences of modes of learning. This occurred in the response to the preference for the method of instruction and for the frequency of an activity.

Age levels: Age-level groups had a significant difference occur in the response to the frequency of an activity.

Levels of formal education attained: No significant differences occurred in the response given on preferences of any of the three modes of learning by groups from the levels of formal education attained.

Discussion.--Sites of program participation was the independent variable in which the most significant differences occurred in response to preferences for modes of learning. The reasons for this finding were not addressed by the study. There are a variety of factors, or combinations of factors, that could be responsible for this phenomenon. The same factors that were mentioned earlier for possibly influencing the results of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 of the study could also be involved in this question.

Research Question 5

How do reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized learning activity compare with the reasons cited by younger adult participants (using the CNS study reported by Cross [1974] for comparison purposes where appropriate)?

Reasons for attending an organized learning activity used in the study were factored into Peterson's nine orientations according to how they had been factored in the CNS study, as reported in Appendix F.

Item 3, "To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment," was the reason most frequently cited by the respondents in both studies. Peterson factored this item into the Knowledge Orientation. The investigator did not know into which of Houle's three orientations to factor this item. Part of the statement, "To become better informed," seemed to be learning related, whereas the last portion, "personal enjoyment and enrichment," seemed to be activity related. Therefore, Item 3 was listed as a very important reason for attending an organized learning activity but was not factored into any of Houle's three orientations.

Item 17, "To become a happier person," and Item 5, "To be a better parent, husband or wife," were both factored by Peterson into Peterson's Goal Orientation. The investigator factored Item 17 into Houle's Activity Orientation and Item 5 into Houle's Goal Orientation.

Item 3, "To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment," and Item 17, "To become a happier person," were the only items of the 20 reasons for attending an organized learning activity that were factored differently in this study than how Peterson would probably have factored them into Houle's three orientations of Learning, Activity, and Goal.

Analysis.--The following tables were used for comparison purposes. Table 27 presents the 20 reasons for attending an organized learning activity ranked by percentage of selection for the two studies. Table 28 presents the 20 reasons for attending an organized learning activity factored into Peterson's nine orientations and then into Houle's three orientations. Table 29 presents selected characteristics of the respondents of this study compared with the respondents of the CNS study. The percentage of selection was used when ranking items in order for comparison purposes between the two studies.

Data to test Research Question 5 were gathered from information provided by respondents' answers to Items 10 through 29 of the questionnaire (Appendix C) of the study and information gathered from Table 10 in Planning Non-Traditional Programs (Cross, 1974, p. 42). Data are also provided in Tables 27, 28, and 29 of this study.

Table 27.--Twenty reasons for attending an organized learning activity, ranked by percentage of selection for both studies.

Item #	Reason	Rank	CNS N=1207 %	Study N=100 %	Rank
3	To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	1	55.0	96.9	1
4	To meet new people.	8	18.0	96.0	2
17	To become a happier person.	4	26.0	94.9	3
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	2	32.0	93.9	4
13	To become a more effective citizen.	12	11.0	93.7	5
15	To feel a sense of belonging.	14	9.0	91.6	6
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	6	19.0	89.7	7
10	To improve my spiritual well-being.	11	13.0	82.7	8
11	To better understand community problems.	14	9.0	77.7	9
14	To learn about my own culture or background.	18	8.0	66.3	10
9	To be better able to serve my church.	13	10.0	63.0	11
20	To get away from personal problems.	19	7.0	58.4	12
19	To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	14	9.0	50.0	13
5	To be a better parent, husband or wife.	6	19.0	31.9	14
6	To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	20	4.0	31.2	15
8	To work towards certification or licensing.	10	14.0	10.8	16
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	3	27.0	9.7	17
1	To help to get a new job.	8	18.0	7.2	18
2	To help to advance in present job.	5	25.0	5.3	19
18	To work towards a degree.	14	9.0	3.4	20

Note: The percentages indicated in the Study column include all responses for ALWAYS, USUALLY, and SELDOM.

Table 28.--Factoring of reasons for attending an organized learning activity into Peterson's and Houle's orientations.

Item #	Reason	Peterson's Orientation	Houle's Orientation
3 ^a	To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	Knowledge	
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	Knowledge	Learning
4	To meet new people.	Social	Activity
15	To feel a sense of belonging.	Social	Activity
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	Escape	Activity
20	To get away from personal problems.	Escape	Activity
17	To become a happier person.	Personal Fulfillment	Activity
5	To be a better parent, husband or wife.	Personal Fulfillment	Goal
13	To become a more effective citizen.	Community Goals	Goal
11	To better understand community problems.	Community Goals	Goal
19	To work towards a solution to problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	Community Goals	Goal
10	To improve my spiritual well-being.	Religious	Goal
9	To be better able to serve my church.	Religious	Goal
6	To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	Obligation Fulfillment	Goal
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	Obligation Fulfillment	Goal
14	To learn more about my culture or background.	Cultural Knowledge	Goal
8	To work towards certification or licensing.	Personal Goals	Goal
1	To help to get a new job.	Personal Goals	Goal
2	To help to advance in present job.	Personal Goals	Goal
18	To work towards a degree.	Personal Goals	Goal

^aItem 3 was not factored into any of Houle's orientations because the investigator did not believe it to be a precise item that fit into any one of Houle's orientations.

Table 29.--Characteristics of respondents of this study compared with CNS study respondents.

Characteristic	Study (N=100) %	CNS (N=1207) %
Sex:		
Male	19.0	49.0
Female	81.0	51.0
Age:		
18-44	0	72.0
45-64	0	28.0
65-69	36.0	0
70-74	32.0	0
75-up	32.0	0
Race:		
Black	18.0	10.0
Nonblack	82.0	90.0
Marital Status:		
Single	5.0	18.0
Married	19.0	76.0
Widowed/divorced	74.0	5.0
Formal Schooling:		
1-8 years	36.0	5.0
9-11 years	16.0	12.0
High school diploma	20.0	38.0
Some college	16.0	21.0
4-year college graduate	9.0	21.0
Occupation:		
Blue collar	55.6	34.0
Sales/clerical	22.2	20.0
White collar	11.1	23.0
Job Status:		
Full-time employed	2.0	57.0
Part-time employed	5.0	10.0
Retired and/or disabled	88.0	N.A.
Type of Community:		
Urban	14.0	81.0
Rural	19.0	19.0
Suburban	27.0	N.A.
Inner-city	20.0	N.A.
Not designated	20.0	N.A.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of nonresponses.

^aN.A. = information not available.

Comparison of reasons cited by older and younger adults:

In comparing reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized learning activity in this study and the reasons cited by younger adult participants (CNS study by Cross in 1974), the rank order of reasons for attending an organized learning activity and similarities between the two studies are shown in Tables 30 and 31.

Table 30.--A comparison of the most similarly ranked items in the two studies.

Item #	Reason	Rank Study	Rank CNS
3	To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	1	1
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	4	2
17	To become a happier person.	3	4
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	7	6

Table 31.--A comparison of reasons with the greatest difference of rank in the two studies.

Item #	Reason	Rank Study	Rank CNS
2	To help to advance in present job.	19	5
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	17	3
1	To help get a new job.	18	8

Summary.--The rank order of reasons selected by older adult participants of organized learning activities in this study was similar to the rank order selected by the younger adults in the CNS study except in the areas of reasons that are related to jobs or pleasing an employer.

When using Houle's three orientations (Learning, Goal, and Activity) as a guide, the reasons that were the most important to the respondents of the study for participating in an organized learning activity were those related to the Activity and Learning orientations. Reasons related to the Goal orientation were usually not considered to be important. The finding that the Goal orientation was the least important to the respondents of this study is contrary to the findings of McKee (1972) and Houle (1973). Their findings indicated that Goal orientations were most important, Learning orientations second, and Activity orientations least important.

Discussion.--Older adult participants of organized learning activities are not as goal oriented as younger adult students. The older student is much more likely to participate in an organized learning activity because he/she finds in the circumstance of the activity a meaning that has no necessary connection at all with the content or subject of the activity. An example would be a person attending an activity for the social-participation aspect of the activity.

The study did not address itself to why this happens. Several factors, or combinations of factors, could be responsible for older adults being so strongly activity oriented. The fact that 74 percent

of the study sample were widowed or divorced might be an influencing factor. The kind of program and the site of the program or the age of the older respondents might also be influencing factors.

The fact that we do not know why the older adults of the study are more activity oriented than younger adults does not change the fact that they are. It does, however, present usable information to administrators and planners of programs for older adults as well as present questions for future studies.

Information About the Sample

The sample was one of convenience. It was composed of older adult participants selected from five different sites of program participation within the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. The five sites selected were (1) Jenison Plaza, in the suburban community of Jenison; (2) the Caledonia Board of Education Building, in the rural community of Caledonia; (3) Grandview Apartment complex, in an urban area of Grand Rapids; (4) the United Methodist Community House, in an inner-city area of Grand Rapids; and (5) the Emeritus College of Aquinas College.

Tables 32 and 33 present information about the entire sample. Tables 34 through 38 present information about each of the five unique groups from which the sample was composed. Each site of program participation was selected to get representation from a broad spectrum of older adult participants of organized learning activities within the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area.

Table 32 presents information about some of the characteristics of the respondents from sites of program participation.

Table 32.--Some characteristics of respondents from sites of program participation.

Characteristic	All (N=100) %	Jenison Plaza (N=27) %	Caledonia (N=19) %	Grandview Apts. (N=14) %	United Methodist Community House (N=20) %	Aquinas Emeritus College (N=20) %
Sex:						
Male	19.0	11.1	26.3	0	25.0	30.0
Female	81.0	88.9	73.7	100.0	75.0	70.0
Age:						
65-69	36.0	33.3	31.6	42.9	30.0	45.0
70-74	32.0	55.6	26.3	28.6	15.0	25.0
75-up	32.0	11.1	42.1	28.6	55.0	30.0
Race:						
Black	18.0	0	0	7.1	85.0	0
Native American	1.0	0	5.3	0	0	0
White	81.0	100.0	94.7	72.9	15.0	100.0
Marital Status:						
Single	5.0	0	0	7.1	0	20.0
Married	19.0	14.8	26.3	14.3	0	40.0
Divorced/widowed	74.0	81.5	73.7	78.6	100.0	35.0
Formal Education:						
1-8	36.0	44.4	47.4	7.1	70.0	0
9-11	16.0	7.4	31.6	28.6	20.0	0
H.S. diploma	20.0	29.6	15.8	35.7	10.0	10.0
Some college	16.0	18.5	0	0	0	55.0
4-yr. & adv. degrees	9.0	0	0	14.3	0	35.0
Employment:						
Full or part time	7.0	0	0	14.3	0	25.0
Retired/disabled	85.0	96.3	94.7	85.7	100.0	60.0
Looking for work	2.0	0	0	0	0	10.0
Type of Job:						
Blue collar	58.0	55.6	78.9	42.9	95.0	15.0
Clerical	10.0	22.2	10.5	7.1	0	5.0
White collar	20.0	11.1	5.3	7.1	0	75.0
Annual Income:						
Under \$3,000	13.0	0	10.5	0	55.0	0
\$3,000-\$8,999	40.0	37.0	63.2	57.1	45.0	5.0
\$9,000-\$15,999	11.0	25.9	5.3	7.1	0	10.0
\$16,000-\$24,999	5.0	7.4	0	0	0	15.0
\$25,000-up	8.0	0	0	0	0	40.0

Note: Percentages do not always add up to 100 percent because not all of the respondents answered all of the questions.

Table 33 presents information about the respondents of the study.

Table 33.--Information about the respondents of the study (N = 100).

-
1. Eighty-one percent were female; 19% were male.
 2. Thirty-six percent were between the ages of 65-69, 32% were between the ages of 70-74, and 32% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. Eighty-one percent were White, 18% were Black, and 1% were Native Americans.
 4. Sixty-six percent were widowed, 19% were married, and 13% were single or divorced.
 5. Thirty-six percent had a formal education of eighth grade or less, 36% had completed the ninth grade or had received a high school diploma, 16% had received some college training, and 9% had received either a four-year degree or an advanced degree.
 6. Eighty-eight percent were retired or disabled, 7% were still working either full or part time, and 2% were looking for a job.
 7. Fifty-eight percent had been blue-collar workers, 10% had been in sales or clerical positions, and 20% had been white-collar workers.
 8. Thirty-three percent had annual incomes of less than \$6,000, 21% had annual incomes of \$6,000-\$15,999, and 13% had incomes of more than \$16,000.
 9. Five percent had been encouraged to participate in an educational program by their spouse, 4% by a sister, 1% by a brother, while 61% said that no one had encouraged them to participate.
 10. During the last 12 months, the most frequent types of classes enrolled in by the sample were: Hobbies or crafts 64%, Religion 43%, Adult Basic Education 41%, Personal Enrichment 37%, High School Completion 29%, and Citizenship 25%.
 11. The method(s) of course instruction they had received during the last 12 months were: Seminars 40%, Lectures & Discussion 39%, and Traditional Lecture 13%.
 12. The percentages of participation by sites of program participation: Jenison Plaza 27%, Caledonia 19%, Grandview Apartments 14%, United Methodist Community House 20%, and Aquinas Emeritus College 20%.
-

Note: Totals may not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all questions.

Table 34 presents information about the respondents from the Jenison Plaza site of program participation.

Table 34.--Information about the respondents from the Jenison Plaza site of program participation (N = 27).

-
1. Eleven and one-tenth percent were male; 88.9% were female.
 2. Thirty-three and three-tenths percent were between the ages of 65-69, 55.6% were between the ages of 70-74, and 11.1% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. One hundred percent of the respondents were White.
 4. Seventy-four and one-tenth percent were widowed, 14.8% were married, and 7.4% were divorced.
 5. Forty-four and four-tenths percent had a formal education of eighth grade or less, 37% had completed ninth grade or had received a high school diploma, 18.5% had some college, but none of this group had completed college.
 6. Ninety-six and three-tenths percent were retired; none were working full time, part time, or looking for a job.
 7. Fifty-five and six-tenths percent had been blue-collar workers, 22.2% had been in sales or clerical positions, and 22.2% had been white-collar workers.
 8. None had an annual income of less than \$3,000, 37% had annual incomes of between \$3,000 and \$8,999, 25.9% had annual incomes of between \$9,000 and \$15,999, and 7.4% had annual incomes of between \$20,000 and \$24,999.
 9. This group had the largest percentage of 70-74 years of age group and the smallest 75-up years of age group with 55.6% and 11.1%.
 10. They had the highest percentage of retired people.
 11. They had the largest percentage of sales/clerical jobs.
 12. They had the highest percentage with an annual income of between \$9,000 and \$15,000.
 13. This group were participating in classes of Geography and Local History.
 14. Several of this group had just returned from a trip to Hawaii.
-

Note: Totals might not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Table 35 presents information about the respondents from the Caledonia site of program participation.

Table 35.--Information about the respondents from the Caledonia site of program participation (N = 19).

-
1. Twenty-six and three-tenths percent were male; 73.7% were female.
 2. Thirty-one and six-tenths percent were between the ages of 65-69, 26.3% were between the ages of 70-74, and 42.1% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. Ninety-four and seven-tenths percent were White and 5.3% were Native Americans.
 4. Seventy-three and seven-tenths percent were widowed and 26.3% were married.
 5. Forty-seven and four-tenths percent had a formal education of eighth grade or less, 47.4% had completed ninth grade or had received a high school diploma, and none of the Caledonia respondents had any college-type education.
 6. Ninety-four and seven-tenths percent were retired; none were working full time, part time, or were looking for a job.
 7. Seventy-eight and nine-tenths percent had been blue-collar workers or had been farmers, 10.5% had been in clerical or sales positions, and 10.6% had been white-collar workers.
 8. None of the Caledonia group had annual incomes of less than \$3,000, 42.1% had an annual income of between \$3,000 and \$5,999, 21.1% had annual incomes of between \$6,000 and \$8,999, 5.3% had annual incomes of between \$9,000 and \$11,999, and none had incomes of more than \$12,000.
 9. The Caledonia group had the highest percentage with a formal education of ninth to eleventh grades.
 10. This group had the highest percentage of annual income between \$3,000 and \$8,999.
 11. This group had the highest percentage of the respondents working on their High School Completion program.
 12. They had the second highest percentage of retirees.
 13. The program this group participated in was called Things in Print.
-

Note: Totals might not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Table 36 presents information about the respondents from the Grandview Apartments site of program participation.

Table 36.--Information about the respondents from the Grandview Apartments site of program participation.

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1. All of the Grandview Apartments respondents were female.
 2. Forty-two and eight-tenths percent were between the ages of 65-69, 28.6% were between the ages of 70-74, and 28.6% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. Seven and one-tenth percent of the respondents were Black and 92.9% were White.
 4. Sixty-four and three-tenths percent of the respondents were widowed, 14.3% were divorced, 14.3% were married, and 7.1% were single.
 5. Seven and one-tenth percent had a formal education of eighth grade or less, 28.6% had a formal education of between the ninth and eleventh grades, 35.7% had earned a high school diploma, and 14.3% had earned a four-year or graduate degree.
 6. Eighty-five and seven-tenths percent were retired, 14.2% were employed full or part time, and none were disabled or looking for a job.
 7. Forty-two and nine-tenths percent had been blue-collar workers, 7.1% had held clerical or sales positions, and 7.1% had been white-collar workers.
 8. None of the Grandview Apartments respondents had annual incomes of less than \$3,000, 50% had incomes of between \$3,000 and \$5,999, 7.1% had incomes of between \$6,000 and \$8,999, and 7.1% had incomes of between \$12,000 and \$15,999. No other incomes were reported for this group.
 9. This group had the highest percentage of women.
 10. They had the highest percentage of high school diplomas.
 11. They had the highest percentage of no responses to questions.
 12. All of these respondents lived in the same apartment complex.
 13. They were the only group meeting within the building in which they lived.
 14. Their program was a program of physical fitness.
-

Note: Totals might not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Table 37 presents information about the respondents from the United Methodist Community House site of program participation.

Table 37.--Information about the respondents from the United Methodist Community House site of program participation (N = 20).

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1. Twenty-five percent were male and 75% were female.
 2. Thirty percent were between the ages of 65-69, 15% were between the ages of 70-74, and 55% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. Eighty-five percent of the respondents were Black and 15% were White.
 4. One hundred percent of this group were divorced (15%) or widowed (85%).
 5. Seventy percent had a formal education of eighth grade or less, 20% had completed the ninth through eleventh grades, and 10% had a high school diploma.
 6. All of this group were retired or disabled.
 7. Ninety-five percent were blue-collar workers; the other 5% did not respond to this question.
 8. Fifty-five percent had an annual income of less than \$3,000, 40% had annual incomes of \$3,000 to \$5,000, and 5% had incomes of between \$6,000 and \$8,999.
 9. This group had the largest percentage of respondents aged 75 and up.
 10. They had the largest percentage of Blacks in their group.
 11. They made up the largest percentage of widowed respondents.
 12. This group had attained the lowest amount of formal education.
 13. They had the highest percentage of retirees in their group.
 14. They had the highest percentage of blue-collar workers.
 15. They had the highest percentage of annual income under \$3,000.
 16. They had the lowest income of the groups: 95% under \$6,000.
 17. The programs this group participated in were ceramics, sewing, and Adult Basic Education.
-

Note: Totals might not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Table 38 presents information about the respondents from the Aquinas Emeritus College site of program participation.

Table 38.--Information about the respondents from the Aquinas Emeritus College site of program participation (N = 20).

-
1. Thirty percent were male and 70% were female.
 2. Forty-five percent were between the ages of 65-69, 25% were between the ages of 70-74, and 30% were 75 years of age or older.
 3. All of this group were White.
 4. Twenty percent were single, 40% were married, 35% were divorced or widowed, and 5% did not respond to this question.
 5. Ten percent had a high school diploma, 55% had some college training, 35% had four-year or advanced graduate degrees.
 6. Twenty-five percent were employed full or part time, 60% were retired, and 10% were looking for work.
 7. Fifteen percent were blue-collar workers, 5% were sales or clerical workers, and 75% were white-collar workers.
 8. Five percent had annual incomes of between \$6,000 and \$8,999, 10% had incomes of between \$9,000 and \$15,999, 20% had incomes of between \$16,000 and \$24,999, and 40% had incomes of over \$25,000.
 9. This group had the highest percentage of males.
 10. They had the highest group of the 65-69 age group.
 11. They had the highest percentage of single respondents.
 12. They also had the highest percentage of married respondents.
 13. They had the lowest percentage of married respondents.
 14. They had the lowest percentage of widowed respondents.
 15. This group had attained the highest level of formal education.
 16. The highest average annual income was received by this group.
 17. This group had the lowest percentage of blue-collar workers.
 18. This group had the largest group of white-collar workers.
 19. The program they participated in was Sacred Scriptures and Psychology of the Mature Years.
-

Note: Totals might not equal 100% because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Discussion

Tables 32 and 33 presented general information about the entire sample. Tables 34 through 38 presented information about the respondents from each of the five sites of program participation. The study sample was composed of five unique groups of respondents selected from five sites of program participation. Each site was located within the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. Generalizing the findings from this study to groups of older adult participants of organized learning activities is not appropriate.

Summary of Chapter IV

An in-depth study of the presentation and analysis of findings of each question was found in Chapter IV. Included was a restatement of each question, an introduction followed by an analysis and presentation of pertinent data, and a discussion of the findings. Information about the entire sample as well as each of the five unique groups was also presented.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was three-fold:

1. To examine relationships between reasons cited by older adult participants in organized learning activities and four independent variables: (1) age levels, (2) levels of formal education attained, (3) levels of educational program participation, and (4) sites of program participation.

2. To examine the preferences older adult participants have for three modes of learning: (1) how a learning activity is conducted, (2) time schedule for an activity, and (3) frequency of an activity.

3. To compare reasons cited by older adults (in this study) and younger adults (CNS study) for attending an organized learning activity.

Research Question 1

How important to the respondents are the reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity?

As previously cited in Chapter II, Houle classified reasons for attending an organized learning activity into three orientations:

1. The Goal oriented (those who use education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives).

2. The Activity or Social-participation oriented (those who take part in an activity because they find in the circumstances of learning a meaning that has no connection at all with the content of the activity).

3. The Learning oriented (those who seek knowledge for its own sake).

Following Houle's classification, the seven reasons ranked as most important by the respondents could be described as predominantly Social-participation (activity) or Learning oriented. These seven reasons were:

1. To become a happier person.
2. To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.
3. To meet new people.
4. Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.
5. To feel a sense of belonging.
6. To become a more effective citizen.
7. To get away from the routine of daily living.

The six reasons ranked as least important by the respondents could be described as Goal oriented. These six reasons were:

1. To work towards a degree.
2. To help to get a job.
3. To help to advance in present job.
4. To work towards certification or licensing.
5. To meet the requirements of my employer, profession, or someone in authority.
6. To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.

The reasons cited as most important tended to relate to personal fulfillment rather than to career and occupational development. It would appear from the findings that the older adult is more Learning and Social-participation (activity) oriented than Goal oriented.

An interesting finding of this study is that two reasons in the Social-participation orientation (to meet new people and to become a happier person) seemed to be just as important as the Learning-oriented reasons. It also appears that meeting new people and socially interacting with people are important educational motivations for many older adults.

Research Question 2

Do reasons cited by older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

Sites of program participation groups had significant differences occur in 40 percent or 8 of the 20 reasons cited by respondents for attending an organized learning activity. Four of these reasons were considered to be important:

1. To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.
2. To meet new people.
3. To become a more effective citizen.
4. To become a happier person.

Levels of educational program participation groups had significant differences occur in 15 percent or in 3 of the 20 reasons cited by respondents for attending an organized learning activity.

The one reason considered to be important in which a significant difference occurred was: "To become a more effective citizen."

Age levels and levels of education attained groups had no significant differences occur in reasons cited by respondents for attending an organized learning activity.

Sites of program participation was the demographic characteristic (independent variable) of the four used in the study in which significant differences occurred most frequently in reasons cited for attending an organized learning activity.

Responses by sites of program participation.--Respondents from the five groups within the sites of program participation indicated a significant difference in four reasons that were considered to be most important. The four reasons were: (1) "To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment;" (2) "To meet new people"; (3) "To become a more effective citizen;" and (4) "To become a happier person." The choice of ALWAYS (selected from ALWAYS, USUALLY, SELDOM, and NEVER) was the most frequent response to the reasons stated above.

Respondents from Aquinas Emeritus College and United Methodist Community House differed the greatest in the percentage by which ALWAYS was cited for the reason "To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment." Caledonia and Grandview Apartments groups differed the greatest in the percentage by which ALWAYS was cited for the reason "To meet new people." Groups from the Grandview Apartments and United Methodist Community House differed the greatest in the percentage by which ALWAYS was cited for the reason "To become a more effective citizen." Respondents from Caledonia and Grandview Apartments differed

the greatest in the percentage by which ALWAYS was cited for the reason "To become a happier person."

Respondents from the Grandview Apartments and Caledonia were most likely to disagree with the other residential groups on reasons considered to be most important for attending an organized learning activity. Jenison Plaza respondents were the group in the study most likely NOT to disagree significantly with other groups as to reasons they considered important for attending an organized learning activity.

Responses by levels of educational program participation.--

Respondents from the four groups within levels of educational program participation recorded a significant difference in only one reason that was considered to be most important. The reason was "To become a more effective citizen." Adult Basic Education and Personal Enrichment groups differed the greatest in the percentage by which ALWAYS was cited for the reason "To become a more effective citizen."

Adult Basic Education and Personal Enrichment seemed to be the two groups most likely to disagree with other groups within the levels of educational program participation groups for reasons considered to be important for attending an organized learning activity.

Research Question 3

How important to the respondents are the preferences cited for the modes of learning?

Methods of instruction, activity time schedule, and frequency of an activity were modes of instruction analyzed in the study. An item had to be cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents as preferred in order to be considered most important.

Modes of learning ranked as most important.--

Methods of instruction: "Small group (seminar)" and "lecture and discussion" were each cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents as their preferred method of instruction.

Activity time schedule: "Weekday mornings" was the only item cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents as their preference for an activity time schedule.

Frequency of an activity: "Once per week" was the only item cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents as their preference for the frequency of an activity.

Modes of learning ranked as least important.--Preferences for a mode of learning considered to be least important were those items cited by less than 5 percent of the respondents. The following items were in the least-important category for each respective mode of learning.

Method of instruction: "Independent study" and "traditional lecture" were cited by 4 percent of the respondents. "Laboratory or shop" was cited by 2 percent of the respondents, while "lecture and laboratory" was supported by no one.

Activity time schedule: "Over the noon hour" was cited by 3 percent of the respondents. "Weekday evenings" and "Saturday/Sunday (weekends)" were each cited by 1 percent of the respondents.

Frequency of an activity: "Four times weekly" was cited by 1 percent of the respondents. "Every other week" and "once a month" received no support as a preference for the frequency of an activity.

Modes of learning preferred by the respondents of the study were clearly defined. "Small group (seminar)" and "lecture and discussion" were both preferred by more than 40 percent of the respondents as the method of instruction.

"Weekday mornings" was the activity time schedule preferred by the respondents. "Once weekly" was the preferred choice for the frequency of an activity.

An interesting conclusion is that although traditional lecture is frequently used as a method of instruction, it was one of the methods least preferred by older participants.

Research Question 4

Do preferences cited for modes of learning by older adult participants of organized learning activities differ significantly between groups within selected demographic characteristics?

Sites of program participation groups had significant differences occur in 27.4 percent or 5 of the 17 items cited by respondents as preferred modes of learning. The items in which significant differences occurred were: "lecture and discussion," "small group (seminar)," "independent study," "weekday mornings," and "five times weekly."

Levels of educational program participation groups had significant differences occur in 11.7 percent or 2 of the 17 items cited by the respondents. The items in which significant differences occurred were: "traditional lectures" and "five times weekly."

Age level groups had significant differences occur in 5.8 percent or 1 of the 17 items cited by the respondents as a preferred mode of learning. The item was "twice weekly."

Levels of education attained groups had no significant differences occur in items cited by the respondents as preferred modes of learning.

Sites of program participation seemed to be the demographic characteristic (independent variable) of the four used in the study in which significant differences most frequently occurred in preferences cited for modes of learning.

Responses according to sites of program participation.--

Respondents from the five groups within sites of program participation indicated a significant difference in three modes of learning that were considered to be the most important preferences. These three preferences considered to be the most important were: "lecture and discussion," "small group (seminar)," and "weekday morning activities." All three of these preferences were cited by more than 40 percent of the respondents.

Respondents from Caledonia and Jenison Plaza differed the greatest in the percentage by which "lecture and discussion" was cited as a preference for methods of instruction. Caledonia and Jenison Plaza respondents differed the greatest in the percentage by which "small group (seminar)" was cited as a preference for methods of instruction. Grandview Apartments and United Methodist Community House groups differed the greatest in the percentage by which "weekday morning activities" was cited as the preference for an activity time

schedule. It would appear that Caledonia and Jenison Plaza respondents were most likely to disagree with other groups from areas of residence on items related to preferences for modes of learning.

The United Methodist Community House was the only group to cite preferences for meeting "five times a week" for the frequency of an activity. This citing could have been influenced by the fact that the noonday meal is the focal point of the program presented by the United Methodist Community House. Various activities occurred before and after the noon meal.

Methods of instruction was the mode of learning in which the most significant differences will most likely occur between groups from within the sites of program participation.

Responses according to levels of educational program participation.--

Levels of education attained and age levels: No significant differences occurred between any groups within the above-mentioned demographic characteristics (independent variables) and any preference considered to be important as a mode of learning.

Research Question 5

How do reasons cited by older adults for attending an organized learning activity in this study compare with the reasons cited by younger adult participants of the CNS study of 1974?

When using Houle's three learning orientations (Learning, Social-participation, and Goal) for factoring purposes, results of the study indicated that older adult participants of organized learning

activities were much more Social participation (activity) oriented than younger adult participants.

Younger adult participants ranked "advancement in present job" and "to get a job" high as the fifth and eighth most popular reasons for attending an organized learning activity. Older adult participants of organized learning activities ranked "advancement in present job" and "to get a job" as low as the eighteenth and nineteenth reasons out of a list of 20.

Social goals of "meeting new people" and "feeling a sense of belonging" were ranked higher (second and sixth) by older adult participants than by younger adult participants, who ranked the items as eighth and thirteenth, respectively. "To attain a degree" was ranked fourteenth by the younger adult participants and last (twentieth) by the older adult participants.

Three of the four most popular items cited by the younger and older adult participants for attending an organized learning activity were the same for both groups. These were: (1) "To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment; (2) "To become a happier person"; and (3) "Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning." These were considered to be the most important reasons for attending an organized learning activity by older adults as well as younger adults.

Older adults in this study placed more importance on meeting new people and feeling a sense of belonging than did the younger adults who participated in the CNS study. This study supported the claim that the need to know--that is, the need for mental stimulation--

is an insatiable, on-going experience, regardless of age. The potential for learning as a self-fulfilling and significant activity will have to be stressed for the older adult learner.

Implications of the Study

The study indicated that reasons for attending an organized learning activity and preferred modes of learning are essential considerations in programming for the older adult learner. Therefore, institutions that sponsor such programs must be prepared to present a variety of educational experiences to meet the needs of older adults. Individuals involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective programs for older adults need to be aware of some of the following considerations related to modes of learning and curriculum.

Most older adults participating in organized learning activities seem to think their learning needs are best met with a small group (seminar) type of learning experience or a lecture/discussion learning model. The time and frequency of the learning experience could be a weekly seminar held during the late morning hours with a break for lunch and the opportunity to socialize.

Social-participation opportunities might be designed into each session so that each participant will be encouraged to "meet new people," "feel a sense of belonging," and have the "opportunity to become a happier person." Community and local issues could be discussed along with the implications of what it means "to be a good citizen." International, national, state, and local issues might be

discussed to keep abreast of what is going on in the community as well as in the world today.

Adult education should be regarded as an "opportunity" as well as a process to which all other aspects of living in the later years should be related. That is, it should provide creative and meaningful experiences for older adults seeking practical solutions to their problems, more productive use of leisure time, intellectual stimulation, and personal fulfillment.

Recommendations for Future Study

If the needs of older adults are going to be successfully met, decisions related to program planning, scheduling, content, and evaluation must reflect the results of past and future research. This investigator suggests the following questions and areas for further investigation:

1. Meeting new people and interacting with people are important educational motivations for the older adult participant of organized learning activities.

- a. What forms of socially interactive learning are most successful?
- b. How can convenience of location be combined with social interaction?

2. Research indicates that only 2.3 percent of older adults participate in organized learning activities.

- a. When not involved in organized learning activities, what and how do older adults learn?
- b. What kinds of problems do older adults need to solve?

3. Replicate the study in other Michigan communities (Flint, Lansing, Saginaw, or Muskegon):

- a. To determine if regional differences exist between reasons given by older adult learners for participating in organized learning activities.
- b. To coordinate organized learning activities for older adults across regions.
- c. To help adult educators to be more effective in developing and planning programs for older adults.

The opportunities for research in the area of education for the older adult learner are virtually unlimited. It is hoped that the exploitation of these opportunities will foster development of attractive, functional, and meaningful programs for the older adult learner.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF PARTICIPATION

Table A-1.--Table of participation.

Program Level	Program Sponsor	Geographical Residence	No. of Participants
Adult Basic Education	United Methodist Community House	Inner-city	20
High School Completion	Caledonia Community Education	Rural	16
	Grandville Community Education	Suburban	15
Personal Enrichment	Caledonia Community Education	Rural	3
	Grandville Community Education	Suburban	12
	Grand Rapids Community Education (Grandview Apartments)	Urban	14
College Level	Emeritus College of Aquinas College	Metropolitan area	20

APPENDIX B

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION



ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A Cooperative Program of
Grandville, Hamilton, Hudsonville, and Jenison
3131 Barrett Street
Grandville, Michigan 49418



November 2, 1981

Dear Adult Learner:

Our Adult and Community School Program, a cooperative effort of Grandville, Hamilton, Hudsonville and Jenison, is interested in providing services that meet the needs and interests of our Senior Citizens.

We are assisting Mr. Dale McGraw, a graduate student at Michigan State University, in conducting a study to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

By answering the attached questionnaire, you will be providing valuable information that will be helpful in understanding the educational needs and interests of older adult learners, like yourself.

Information that you supply on the questionnaire will be kept confidential.

I will appreciate any assistance that you give Mr. McGraw in this matter.

Sincerely,

Virgil Leatherman
Community School Director

SW

SENIOR CITIZEN PROGRAM

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY HOUSE
904 Sheldon Ave., S.E. • Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

PHONE: 241-1645

November 3, 1981

Dear Adult Learner,

The United Methodist Community House is interested in providing programs that meet the needs and interests of our Senior Citizens.

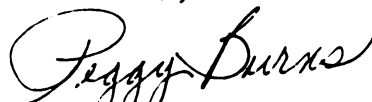
We are assisting Mr. Dale McGraw, a graduate student at Michigan State University, in conducting a study to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

By answering the attached questionnaire, you will be providing valuable information that will be helpful in understanding the educational needs and interests of older adult learners, like yourself.

Information that you supply on the questionnaire will be kept confidential.

I will appreciate any assistance that you give regarding this matter.

Sincerely,


Peggy Burns,
Program Director



Caledonia Community Schools



203 MAIN STREET

/ CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN 49316

/ TELEPHONE 891-8185

PAUL R. WILLIAMS
Superintendent of SchoolsDr. STAN FORTUNA, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent

November 4, 1981

Dear Adult Learner,

The Community Education Program is interested in providing services that meet the needs and interests of our Senior Citizens.

We are assisting Mr. Dale McGraw, a graduate student at Michigan State University, in conducting a study to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

By answering the questionnaire, you will be providing valuable information that will be helpful in understanding the educational needs and interests of older adult learners like yourself.

Information that you supply on the questionnaire will be kept confidential.

I will appreciate any assistance that you give Mr. McGraw in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Evans, Director
Community Education Program
Caledonia Community Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION: DAVID CLARK, President / JOHN TALSMAN, Vice President / ROBERT POWERS, Treasurer
GERALDINE FAIRBROTHER, Secretary / GARRY DURKEE, Trustee / DOROTHY MERRIMAN, Trustee / JOHN FINKBEINER, Trustee



EMERITUS CENTER

AQUINAS COLLEGE • GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506 • (616) 459-8281

November 3, 1981

Dear Adult Learner,

The Emeritus College/Institute of Aquinas College is interested in providing programs that meet the needs and interests of our Senior Citizens.

We are assisting Mr. Dale McGraw, a graduate student at Michigan State University, in conducting a study to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

By answering the attached questionnaire, you will be providing valuable information that will be helpful in understanding the educational needs and interests of older adult learners, like yourself.

Information that you supply on the questionnaire will be kept confidential.

I will appreciate any assistance that you give regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Sister Mary Aquinas Weber
Sr. Mary Aquinas Weber, Director
Emeritus Center

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your:

1. Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age ☐ Under 60 ☐ 65-69 ☐ 75-79 ☐ 85-89
☐ 60-64 ☐ 70-74 ☐ 80-84 ☐ 90 and up
3. Race ☐ Black, Negro ☐ Latino-American, ☐ Native American,
Chicano, Puerto Rican American Indian
☐ White ☐ Asian, Oriental ☐ Other_____
4. Marital Status ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
5. Education completed
☐ 1-8 grades ☐ High school diploma ☐ 4-year degree
☐ 9-11 grades ☐ Some college ☐ Graduate degree
6. Employment status
☐ Full time ☐ Part time ☐ Looking for a job
☐ Retired ☐ Disabled ☐ Other_____
7. Please write in the space below, a short description of the kind of work you usually do (or did if retired or unemployed). For example: farmer, electrical engineer, clerk, typist, homemaker, etc.

8. What was your approximate income last year, before taxes? (If you are married, the combined income of you and your spouse before taxes.)
☐ Under \$3,000 ☐ \$ 9,000-\$11,999 ☐ \$20,000-\$24,999
☐ \$3,000-\$5,999 ☐ \$12,000-\$15,999 ☐ \$25,000-\$29,999
☐ \$6,000-\$8,999 ☐ \$16,000-\$19,999 ☐ \$30,000-over
9. Who in your family has encouraged you to take part in an organized learning activity?
☐ Spouse ☐ One or more brothers ☐ Your children
☐ No one ☐ One or more sisters ☐ Other_____

10. The following list of reasons has been given by adults for attending an organized learning activity. Read each reason and then check how it applies to your participation in an organized learning activity according to four categories. The four categories are: ALWAYS applies, USUALLY applies, SELDOM applies, and NEVER applies.

PLEASE RATE EACH REASON

- | | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SELDOM | NEVER | |
|-----|--------|---------|--------|-------|--|
| 1. | () | () | () | () | To help get a new job. |
| 2. | () | () | () | () | To help to advance in present job. |
| 3. | () | () | () | () | To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment. |
| 4. | () | () | () | () | To meet new people. |
| 5. | () | () | () | () | To be a better parent, husband or wife. |
| 6. | () | () | () | () | To meet requirements for getting into an educational program. |
| 7. | () | () | () | () | To get away from the routine of daily living. |
| 8. | () | () | () | () | To work towards certification or licensing. |
| 9. | () | () | () | () | To be better able to serve my church. |
| 10. | () | () | () | () | To improve my spiritual well-being. |
| 11. | () | () | () | () | To better understand community problems. |
| 12. | () | () | () | () | To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority. |
| 13. | () | () | () | () | To become a more effective citizen. |
| 14. | () | () | () | () | To learn about my own culture or background. |
| 15. | () | () | () | () | To feel a sense of belonging. |
| 16. | () | () | () | () | Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning. |
| 17. | () | () | () | () | To become a happier person. |
| 18. | () | () | () | () | To work towards a degree. |
| 19. | () | () | () | () | To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution. |
| 20. | () | () | () | () | To get away from personal problems. |
| | () | () | () | () | Other, please describe _____ |

11. Following is a list of subjects or skills. Please check the types of organized learning activities that you have been enrolled in during the past 12 months. Include all adult community education courses, correspondence courses, on-the-job training, private lessons, independent study, T.V. courses, or anything else like that.

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- () Adult basic education, such as reading or basic math.
 - () Citizenship or Americanization.
 - () Agriculture or farming.
 - () High-school-credit instruction
 - () College-level instruction
 - () Graduate-level instruction
 - () Technical and vocational skills, such as typing or auto mechanics.
 - () Managerial skills, such as hotel management or business administration.
 - () Professional skills, such as law, teaching, or medicine.
 - () Civics and public affairs, such as consumer education or ecology.
 - () Religion, such as Bible study, ethics, or meditation
 - () Safety, such as first-aid or water safety.
 - () Home and family living, such as home repairs, gardening, or child care.
 - () Personal development, such as personality or physical fitness.
 - () Hobbies or handicrafts, such as photography, weaving, music, or ceramics.
 - () Sports or recreation, such as boating, bridge, or golf.
 - () Other, please describe _____
-

12. Refer to the subject or skill area you checked in Question 11 on which you spent the MOST amount of time. Check the ONE statement below that best describes how that course or activity was conducted.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional lecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent study (self-paced) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture and discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture and laboratory/shop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small group (seminar) | <input type="checkbox"/> A balance, each has merit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory or shop
(on-the-job training) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

13. How do you like to have a learning activity conducted? Check one method.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional lecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent study (self-paced) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture and discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture and laboratory/shop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small group (seminar) | <input type="checkbox"/> A balance, each has merit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory or shop
(on-the-job training) | |

IN THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS, PLEASE CHECK THE ONE STATEMENT THAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH QUESTION.

14. Which time schedule for a learning activity do you like best?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday morning activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities over noon hour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday afternoon activities | during the week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday evening activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday/Sunday (weekends) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday morning and
afternoon activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

15. How often do you like to attend a learning activity?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> Four times weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twice weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> Five times weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> No preference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three times weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> Every other week | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. I am interested in knowing more about ideas and feelings that older adults, like yourself, have about adult education. If you would be willing to talk to me about this in a brief interview, please print your name, address, and phone number in the space below.

Sincerely,

E. Dale McGraw

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone Number _____

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION SHEET

SURVEY OF OLDER ADULT PARTICIPANTS
IN ORGANIZED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

INFORMATION

This survey is designed to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities. An organized learning activity, for the purpose of this study, is a learning activity in which you are enrolled or registered, usually happens at a set time and place, normally under the direction of a school, college, church, neighborhood center, community organization, or other recognized authority. Sunday school classes, Bible classes, and other activities that could be considered worship services are not included.

By answering this questionnaire, you will be providing valuable information that will be beneficial in understanding the educational needs and interests of older adult learners like yourself. Information that you supply on the questionnaire will be kept confidential. Data supplied will be used for research purposes and will not be individually listed on any report.

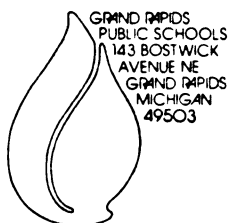
The questionnaire is made up of questions relating to your background and attitudes about learning activities. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, feel free to skip it. Each question has a parentheses to be checked or a line on which to put your answer.

I appreciate your assistance in helping me to better understand why older adults attend organized learning activities.

Thank you.

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF APPRECIATION



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

December 15, 1981

Dear Student,

Grand Rapids Community Education strives to meet the needs and interests of our community's Senior Citizens and, therefore, is very interested in Mr. Dale McGraw's, a graduate student at Michigan State University, study to find out why older adults participate in organized learning activities.

We appreciate your participation in the study by answering a recent questionnaire. Your answers will provide valuable information toward our understanding of the educational needs and interests of older adult learners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "LaDon Gustafson".

LaDon Gustafson
Executive Director
Grand Rapids Community Education

APPENDIX F

COMPARISON OF LEARNING ORIENTATIONS

Table F-1.--Comparison of learning orientations.

Houle 1961	Sheffield 1962	Burgess 1971	Peterson 1974	Cross 1980
Learning Orientation	Learning Orientation	Desire to Know	Knowledge Goals	Desire to Gain Knowledge
Goal Orientation	Personal Goal Orientation	Personal Goals	Personal Fulfillment	Practical Goals
		Formal Requirements	Obligation Fulfillment	Personal Goals
	Societal Goal Orientation	Social Goals	Community Goals	Formal Education Goals
			Cultural Knowledge	Societal Goals
Activity Orientation	Desire- Activity Orientation			
		Desire to Escape	Escape Goals	Desire to Escape or Socialize
		Desire to Take Part in Social Activity	Social Goals	
	Need-Activity Fulfillment	Religious Goal	Religious Goals	
			Personal Goals	

APPENDIX G

**REASONS IDENTIFIED BY PERCENTAGES OF SELECTION
BY SITES OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

Table G-1.--Reasons identified by percentages of selection by sites of program participation.

Item #	Reason	J (N=27)	C (N=19)	G (N=14)	M (N=20)	A (N=20)
1	To help to get a new job.	12.0	10.5	0	5.0	5.0
2	To help to advance in present job.	4.0	0	14.3	5.0	5.0
3	To become better informed, personal enjoyment and enrichment.	100.0	94.7	84.6	100.0	100.0
4	To meet new people.	100.0	100.0	80.6	100.0	95.0
5	To be a better parent, husband or wife.	34.8	50.0	15.4	15.0	40.0
6	To meet requirements for getting into an educational program.	21.7	60.4	30.8	15.0	20.0
7	To get away from the routine of daily living.	92.0	89.5	64.3	100.0	90.0
8	To work towards certification or licensing.	4.2	21.1	15.4	10.0	5.0
9	To be better able to serve my church.	60.9	57.9	50.0	85.0	55.0
10	To improve my spiritual well-being.	83.3	68.4	64.3	100.0	90.0
11	To better understand community problems.	87.5	68.4	61.5	75.0	85.0
12	To meet the requirements of my employer, profession or someone in authority.	13.0	10.5	23.1	0	5.0
13	To become a more effective citizen.	96.2	100.0	71.4	95.0	85.0
14	To learn about my own culture or background.	60.9	84.2	45.5	55.0	75.0
15	To feel a sense of belonging.	95.8	84.2	85.7	95.0	90.0
16	Curiosity, to learn for the sake of learning.	92.0	100.0	85.7	90.0	100.0
17	To become a happier person.	100.0	100.0	78.6	100.0	90.0
18	To work towards a degree.	0	5.3	7.1	0	5.0
19	To work towards a solution of problems, such as discrimination or pollution.	56.5	52.6	41.7	45.0	50.0
20	To get away from personal problems.	43.5	57.9	55.6	70.0	65.0

Key: J = Jenison Plaza
C = Caledonia

G = Grandview Apartments
M = United Methodist
Community House

A = Aquinas Emeritus College

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