Opening Minds through Art (OMA): Meaningful Intergenerational Connections

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Overview

- Art-making simulation
- Understanding Meaningful Connections
- Meaningful Intergenerational Connections: The Case of OMA
- Meaningful Intergenerational Connections and the Future of Society

Let’s Have Some FUN!!

- Work in pairs to create one card together.
- Make an OMA card: Select, compose and glue collage pieces
- Decide who keeps the finished card.

During the activity, did you:

- Smile?
- Use gestures?
- Nod in agreement?
- Lean closer than usual?
- Feel positive emotion?
- Make connection?

The Connectivity Triangle

Task

Person1

Person2
1. Meaningful Connection or “Love 2.0”

It is NOT:
- Family love
- Romantic love
- Love for spiritual being
- Love for soul mate

It does NOT require:
- Shared history
- Deep understanding
- Ever-lasting commitment
- Loyalty
- Intimacy
- Exclusivity
- Unconditional terms


What is “Love 2.0”?
- Positive emotion
- Shared with living beings (strangers, pets)
- Fleeting, subtle, brief
- Micro-moments of warmth and connection
- Fades in minutes/seconds
- Can resonate, reverberate, and get amplified
- Can be increased intentionally

What Happens to Us?

Unconscious Synchronization:
- Synchronizes brains
- Synchronizes biochemistry (oxytocin)
- Synchronizes behaviors

Interpersonal Effects:
- Calm, open, friendlier
- Increased eye contact, discern voice
- More attuned to others
- Better instinct whom to trust
- Frequent occurrence accrue to form bonds

Health effects of “Love 2.0”
- Reduced cortisol
- Reduced blood pressure
- Reduced depression
- Increased pain tolerance
- Improved immune system
- Better cardiovascular health

“Your biological propensities for love and health are intimately intertwined.”
(Fredrickson, 2013, p. 55)
2. Meaningful Intergenerational Connections: The Case of OMA

OMA is an intergenerational art program for people with dementia, developed at Scripps Gerontology Ctr. at Miami University

"OMA" = Grandmother (Dutch, German)

Typical activity: Simple but too difficult to do

OMA art: Complex but easy to do
Opening Minds through Art (OMA) Sites
51 sites in 34 cities 13 states and 3 countries
What is OMA’s impact on elders?

Opening Minds through Art (OMA)

Examples of Well-being and Ill-being

Well-being and Ill-being Domains

Intensity & Frequency of well-being domains:
- Social Interest:
  Interest in others
- Engagement:
  Engaged in activity
- Pleasure:
  Smiles, laughs

Intensity & Frequency of Ill-being domains:
- Disengagement:
  Staring, dozing
- Negative Affect:
  Anger, agitation
- Sadness:
- Confusion

Video analysis: Well-being

Figure 1. Well-being Intensity During OMA Sessions (n=38 participants)
Video analysis: Ill-being

Comparison across activities

- 48 people, 527 observations
- The same people are compared in 5 activities:
  1. OMA
  2. Wolf: Art/music therapy
  3. Non-creative Activity
  4. No activity
  5. Mealtime

Cohen-Mansfield Agitation Inventory (CMAI)
(N=48 people, 527 observations)

What is OMA’s Impact on Students?
**Dementia Attitude Change among Volunteers (N=156)**

- 94% became more positive (147 students)
- 1% did not change (2 students)
- 4% became more negative (7 students)

**Interaction Increased Social Comfort**

- It is **rewarding** to work with people who have ADRD.
- I am **afraid** of people with ADRD. *
- I am **comfortable** touching people with ADRD.
- I would **avoid** an agitated person with ADRD. *
- I feel **relaxed** around people with ADRD.
- I cannot imagine **taking care** of someone with ADRD. *

ADRD = Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias

* = Reverse-scored items

**Large effect size in “Social Comfort”**

Pre and Post DAS for All Students (n=156)

- Social Comfort
- Dementia Knowledge
- Overall DAS Score

$p < .001$

**Qualitative Analysis of Journals**

- 300 journals written by 59 students
- Analyzed for recurring themes
Attitude change: From ....

- “I approached my first visit to [name of facility] with much anxiety.”

- I wasn’t necessarily scared, but more worried that I would do something wrong.”

Students’ Reflections

- 2008-now: 1,450 Miami University students
- In Spring 2017: 47% repeaters
- Six Miami student representatives:
  - Joshua Zak – Interactive Media Studies & Computer Science (2 terms)
  - Paige Ferland – Kinesiology (4 terms)
  - AJ Tatro - Mathematics & Statistics (3 terms)
  - Brianne Safer – Psychology (4 terms)
  - Lindsey Schad – Botany (3 terms)
  - Alex Waldherr –Microbiology (4 terms)

OMA Generates Love 2.0

We all need elders with dementia as co-teachers to achieve genuinely transformational educational goals.

- “When I first started doing OMA though, I didn’t think I would get close to any of the elders. But after 5 weeks of working with her I really had grown attached to her. It’s amazing how you can develop a relationship with someone who really can’t communicate [verbally] at all.”
3. Meaningful Intergenerational Connections & the Future of Society

Brad Simcock, Ph.D.
- Sociology Professor Emeritus (Miami University)
- OMA volunteer for 9 years
- OMA Facilitator Trainer

“The Wall”
- By: Aroha Philanthropies
- Link: https://vimeo.com/163443049

OMA Funding Opportunity
- Funding is available for OHIO nursing homes. (RFP opens 3/15/17; deadline 4/28/17).
- Awards will be announced on May 5, 2017.
- Registration closes by May 29, 2017.
- Online training: June 1-30 PLUS in-person practicum August 16 or 18, 2017.
- Visit our website: www.ScrippsOMA.org
- Like us on FaceBook
Art is the ark of the Imagination
that floats free with age
and leaves the limits of Memory behind

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