SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING PROJECTS BY OLDER LEARNERS: ROLES
FOR EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INITIATING
AND FACILITATING THE PROCESS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Holbrook Lawson Webb, B.S., M.A.
Denton, Texas
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Ways in which educational structures can initiate and facilitate older learners' self-directed learning projects are described in this study. The research was guided by questions related to the ways that educational organizations can facilitate the learning process for older learners.

This study involved two distinct phases of research. In the first phase, a survey was administered to approximately 100 older learners at four organizations for senior citizens; the four organizations were Hillcrest Center for 55+, Golden Learning Opportunities and Workshop, Tulsa Senior Services, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program. The survey enabled the researcher to identify the 10 most frequented sites for gathering information related to the learning projects of senior citizens in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The survey respondents were volunteer participants from classes, social occasions, and other learning opportunities offered by the organizations. The survey produced three sites where older learners pursued learning activities.
Phase two involved ethnographic techniques in order to identify and describe at each three sites specific educational structures that facilitated older learners' self-directed learning projects. The descriptions from each of the identified sites involved three data-collection techniques. The data-collection techniques used included interviews, observation, and artifact collection. The focus of this phase was to describe the educational structures that facilitated the development of learning projects endemic to each site as identified by the older learners. Notes taken during interviews and observations were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Interviews were also transcribed. The transcripts were transferred to a conceptually clustered matrix for each site.

Analyses of the administrator interviews, participant interviews, educational opportunity observations, and artifact collection at each site revealed patterns and trends that represent the educational structures that appeal to older learners as they pursue learning projects. The findings indicate that four patterns or trends were common to each site. These four patterns included accessible materials, service-minded staff, entertainment, and teacher-directed learning style.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Self-directed learning has become a common dimension of learning for adults. Even "corporations, health care agencies, and educational institutions have discovered that self-directed learning ideas and concepts have numerous potential applications" (Long, 1993, p. 1). Self-directed learning is defined as learning that is initiated, implemented, and researched solely by an individual. In addition, the individual learner monitors and evaluates his or her own learning project. Thus, the learner is motivated and directed in the pursuit of knowledge, with little or no guidance from outside sources. The efforts of self-directed learners often are embodied in independent learning projects. An independent learning project is one that is planned, organized, and executed by an individual with help primarily from written material. It has been estimated that the average adult implements approximately five learning projects a year and spends at least 500 hours engaged in these projects (Tough, 1979).

Learning projects tend to range widely in variety and difficulty. For example, learning projects for adult learners can vary from philosophy to philately or even pigeon racing (Brookfield, 1981b). Each project requires that the learner make plans and decisions based upon the
desired learning outcomes. During the learning process, individuals sometimes have difficulty with such aspects as deciding appropriate activities, choosing resources, and overcoming difficult concepts or material (Tough, 1979). Tough noted that, "although a self-teacher supervises the entire course of his learning and ensures that all of the necessary teaching tasks are performed, he does not necessarily perform each of these tasks entirely by himself" (p. 61). When a learner determines that outside assistance is needed, he or she seeks advice from family members, friends, and sometimes from experts.

Several factors suggest a viable role for formal educational organizations in helping older learners accomplish their learning tasks (Brookfield, 1985a; Knowles, 1975; Pevoto, 1989). These include the fact that (a) persons who are 55 years or older comprise the largest age group and most rapidly growing cohort in the United States, (b) self-directed learners at some point may have difficulty achieving a desired learning goal (Tough, 1979), and (c) self-directed learning is an integral part of older adults' life-long learning process (Hiemstra, 1976b). Although there is evidence that few older Americans participate in formal educational opportunities (Oakes, 1971), it does appear that older learners prefer to be actively involved in various independent learning projects (Hiemstra, 1976b).

Pevoto (1989) noted that "a negative self-image as a learner is a major factor in non-participation of older adults in organized educational
activities" (p. 11). To better accommodate older adults' learning needs and to reduce their negative self-image about being a student, educators "must learn how to remove their institutional blinders and recognize all the self-directed, independent learning going on and the needed outside institutional structures" (Hiemstra, 1976b, p. 337). In developing self-directed learning for older adults, educational organizations would do well to examine the roles of educational features or structures that are needed to initiate and facilitate self-directed learning.

Background and Significance of the Study

With Allen Tough's body of landmark research regarding self-directed learning projects, researchers have become more interested in understanding this mode of learning (Tough, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981). There has been considerable interest in defining what learning projects are, how long one is involved in a project, how many projects one participates in within a year, and what types of projects are of particular interest to learners. In addition, researchers have begun to look at older adults and their learning projects, especially given that older adults are the largest and most rapidly growing minority group (Brookfield, 1985b; Knowles, 1975). However, a majority of these studies have not included an examination of the potential link between the specific features or structures of educational organizations and older adults who participate in their self-directed learning projects. This study
furthers knowledge about the processes and strategies of self-directed learning for older learners by providing detailed descriptions of the roles that educational structures play in facilitating self-directed learning, such as knowledge base, that will enable organizations to accommodate in more appropriate ways the learning needs of older learners.

**Purpose of the Study**

Much of the previous research on self-directed learning failed to focus on the learner's perspectives. In response, Candy (1990) called for further research to describe attitudes of self-directed learners toward direction and assistance. Accordingly, the purpose of the present study was to identify and to describe the roles of educational structures in initiating and facilitating older learners' self-directed learning projects.

**Questions to Be Answered**

The following questions provided direction for gathering and reflecting on data related to this study:

1. What educational structures are perceived and validated by older learners in facilitating learning projects?
2. In what ways are those educational structures used by older learners?
Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions are provided:

*Self-directed learning* is a process by which learners are primarily responsible for planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning (Knowles, 1975).

*Learning project* refers to "a highly deliberate effort to gain and retain certain definite knowledge and skill, or to change in some other way" (Tough, 1978, p. 250).

*Educational structure* is an organizational feature or component embodied within a formal learning situation such as university and college courses, museum lectures, and library workshops. Examples of educational structures include teacher-directed learning, service-minded staff, and accessible learning materials.

*Staff personnel* is an individual who is either a teacher or guide in an educational setting. For example, the tour guides at the Gilcrease Museum are staff personnel.

*Service provider* is a person who caters specifically to the needs of an individual. An example of a service provider is the librarian at the Philbrook Museum, who answers the special requests of the Philbrook's Museum members. He might answer a question about the value, authenticity, and time period of a family heirloom.
Grounded theory develops as raw data are gathered and analyzed for patterns. Thus, the theory is generated from the data continuously, as opposed to the theory being stated prior to gathering the data. Grounded theory allows continuous refocusing and development of the research. It is an iterative process in which the researcher "keeps doubling back to more data collection and coding" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 74).

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

This research assumed that subjects in this study were able to respond honestly and openly to the survey questions that identified educational structures used to accomplish learning projects and that the subjects were able to describe accurately and openly the primary characteristics of programs, procedures, and facilitators used by older adult learners.

The generalizability of the results of this study are limited because subjects were residents of Tulsa County, Oklahoma. Also, no effort was made to secure a study sample that represented the ethnic or socioeconomic diversity of the general elderly population of the area. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other geographic locations or socioeconomic groups.
Description of the Study

The focus of this study was to describe and to identify the ways that learning projects are facilitated by educational structures. The strong contextual link between adults and their projects necessitated a qualitative research design to examine, analyze, and describe educational structures that are used by older adults. A description of educational structures emerged from the data collected through observations, interviews, and artifact collection. The qualitative study was divided into two phases. During the first phase, a survey was used to gather information about specific sites in which older adults pursue their learning projects. In the second phase, the educational structures of the three sites identified by the survey were investigated in detail. At each of these sites, events, material, classes, and interviews were recorded.

Summary

An overview of the study was presented in this chapter. The background and the significance of this study were established. The assumptions and the limitations were determined. The definitions of terms used in this study were defined, and a description of the study was provided. In addition, a clear statement of the problem of this study was recorded. The purpose of this study was to identify and to describe the roles of educational structures in facilitating older learners' self-directed learning projects.

The related literature of older adults and self-directed learning is presented in chapter 2. In this chapter, definitions of life-long learning
and self-directed learning are stated. Furthermore, information focusing on the involvement of educational organizations and self-directed learners is presented and discussed. Finally, the chapter contains a review of qualitative methodology literature.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research design of the study. This chapter defines the sites and participants, procedure for the selection of the sites and participants, and procedures for collection of the data. Phase 1 involved a survey to gather data for phase two. Phase 2 focused on the participants, sites, and educational structures. During phase 2, data were collected using interviews, observations, and artifact collection.

Analysis and data findings are presented in chapter 4. Descriptions of the organization of the data, analysis of interview data, analyses of the observations, and the artifacts are presented.

Chapter 5 focuses on the interpretations of the findings, including a discussion of the educational structures and the application to older adults who pursue learning projects. In addition, some implications of the findings are offered.
CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Life-Long Learning

Life-long learning is essential in order to meet the continual needs and demands of new developmental tasks experienced throughout life (Havighurst, 1976). One example of life-long learning is self-directed learning, which has been established as a widespread and distinctive process of nontraditional education for adults (Brookfield, 1985b, 1992, 1993; Fox, 1991; Grow, 1991, 1994; Herbeson, 1991; Long & Ashford, 1976; Tennant, 1992; Tough, 1967), especially older adults (Barret, 1993; Bynum, 1993; Hiemstra, 1976b; Lumsden, 1987; Manheimer, 1993). Life-long learning for adults should be considered in terms of adults' motivation and cognitive, affective, and ethical development rather than just in terms of formal educational practices (Cropley, 1976). Self-directed learning stimulates adult learners to seek independently new information that aids in their emotional and intellectual development, a phenomenon that has led to findings of a positive correlation between life satisfaction and self-directed learning for older adults (Brockett, 1982; Diaz, 1988; East, 1986). In elaborating upon the relationship, Krupp (1991) added the following:
Adults with high self-esteem learn to learn in order to help themselves and others. They utilize this knowledge to grow, improve interpersonal relationships, handle adversity effectively, gather information to make appropriate decisions, and function as responsible persons in our democratic society. (p. 14)

As an increasing number of baby boomers approach retirement, the potential for self-directed learning looms large. Currently, 80% of Americans consider themselves to be life-long learners, and 76% consider themselves to be self-directed learners (Penland, 1979). As individuals age and develop, they undergo changes in family structure, economic status, location, societal role, and quality of life. As a result, many individuals seek fulfillment and clarification of their rapidly changing environment from learning endeavors (Fisher, 1986). Harootyan and Feldman (1990) noted that "the future well being and quality of life in an aging society will depend in large part on new thinking and initiatives in its broadest forms" (p. 347). Consequently, educators and policy makers must begin to consider how older adults function within this rapidly changing environment, how the evolving generation will impact the existing educational programs available to older learners, and how older adults can pursue nontraditional educational opportunities.

In order to fully understand the implications for educators and adult learners, the concept of self-directed learning and analysis of older adults' educational opportunities need careful evaluation. In addition, it is necessary to consider possible ways that self-directed learning and
educational organizations can be combined to better serve the needs of older learners.

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning is a process by which individuals are primarily responsible for planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning (Knowles, 1975). Callender (1992) stated that "self-educating is an attitude and a practice, and perhaps the best chance for humanity, as well as for a profession of adult education, to beget itself" (p. 162).

Self-directed learning has been defined by a myriad of synonyms or terms that are used interchangeably. For example, Sears (1989) noted the following terms that self-directed learning has been called:

- self-instruction [Johnstone & Rivera, 1965];
- self-education [Dickinson & Clark, 1975];
- independent study [Jourard, 1967; Peterson, 1983];
- self-teaching [Tough, 1966];
- individual learning [Smith, 1976];
- self-directed inquiry [Long & Ashford, 1976];
- independent self-education [Johnstone & Rivera, 1965];
- self-initiated learning [Penland, 1979];
- independent adult learning [Brookfield, 1981a];
- andragogical learning [Knowles, 1975];
- self-directed study [Miller, 1964]; and
- autonomous learning [Houle, 1961; Smith, 1976].

(p. 8)

These terms all have in common the idea that self-directed learning is independently initiated, implemented, and researched solely by the individual. Moreover, "an assumption underlying all conceptions of self-directed learning as a process seems to be that the self-directed learner engages in activities normally associated with formal instruction: setting goals, developing strategies" (Oddi, 1987, p. 23). Tough (1978)
included all types of methods, such as reading, observing, attending class, and practicing, for collecting information for learning projects and deliberately acquiring the necessary knowledge.

Because self-directed learning is an independent and self-motivating process, individuals who implement this approach have distinguishable characteristics. Self-directed learning demands a "higher order of learning which involves not only the process of self-instruction but also certain personality characteristics" (Gibbons et al., 1980, p. 42). Peterson (1983) identified the following five assumptions regarding the characteristics of self-directed adult learners:

1. Adults are increasingly self-directed.
2. Adults have a rich background of experience.
3. The content and skill of adults' choosing depends upon their stages and development.
4. Adults are problem-oriented in their approach to learning.
5. Adults are intrinsically motivated. (p. 23)

Consequently, the personality profile of a self-directed learner includes such traits as motivation, intrinsic interest, and varied life experiences.

In the desire to pursue learning projects, self-directed learners may implement as many as five learning projects per year; thus, they may spend at least 500 hours engaged in the projects (Tough, 1979). In his 1978 study, Penland determined that self-planned learners were involved in at least three learning projects per year, which lasted 7 hours or more. While a learner can spend numerous hours per year on a project, the duration of a typical project can last many years. Brookfield (1981b)
noted in his study that "the mean length of the projects surveyed was 22 years and the median 16 years" (p. 16). Thus, self-directed learners are dedicated and tenacious in their learning, even if it takes years.

Learning projects vary from topic to difficulty. For example, learning projects for adult learners can vary from the care and treatment of roses to studying and performing opera (Brookfield, 1981a). The subject matter, which depends upon the individual's interests, is not dictated by a prescribed and delineated course or agenda that is determined by an outside source. Instead, self-directed learners often have either a strong interest which they pursue with great motivation and desire or a mild interest that builds over the years into a deep knowledge or appreciation.

Each project requires the learner to make plans and decisions based upon his or her desired learning outcomes. A series of steps or procedures are typically followed by a self-directed learner. Tough (1971) identified 13 steps in the process:

1. Deciding what detailed knowledge and skill to learn;
2. Deciding the specific activities, methods, resources, or equipment for learning;
3. Deciding where to learn;
4. Setting specific deadlines or intermediate targets;
5. Deciding when to begin a learning episode;
6. Deciding the pace at which to proceed;
7. Estimating the current level of one's knowledge and skill;
8. Detecting any factor that has been blocking or hindering one's learning;
9. Obtaining the desired resources or equipment;
10. Preparing or adapting a room for learning;
11. Saving or obtaining the money necessary for resources;
12. Finding time for learning; and
13. Taking certain steps to increase motivation for certain learning episodes.

Generally, learners move according to these steps in pursuit of their desired learning outcomes.

The readiness for self-directed learning varies greatly according to several factors such as the learner's familiarity with the area in which self-direction is being encouraged, the nature of the educational task to be undertaken, the personality of the learner, the sub-culture from which he or she comes, and the political ethos of the time and culture. (Brookfield, 1992, p. 13)

Because the needs and motivation of individual learners vary, the way in which they accomplish these steps varies as well. Sometimes during the learning process, individuals have difficulty with such steps as deciding appropriate activities, choosing resources, and overcoming difficult concepts or material (Tough, 1979).

When self-directed learners are faced with a difficult situation, they may, at some point, seek guidance through the necessary steps. Tough (1971) found that the 40 interviewees in his study obtained help
from 424 individuals. The number of individuals who helped the learners was significantly greater than the number of individuals who help in a traditional classroom (Tough, 1971). According to Jones (1993) in her study of older adult art learners, "students who are highly self-directed assume control over their art learning. They ask friends for help, voluntarily enroll in art classes and set up their own problems in formal classroom settings" (p. 167).

Not only do older adult self-directed learners move through simple to complex stages of learning, but the educators of self-directed learners move through teaching stages. Grow (1994) described a "course where the teacher moves from expert, to guide, to facilitator, and finally to participant" (p. 165). It is imperative that adult education programs offer learning experiences in which the teacher can adjust to the needs and stages of older self-directed learners. Billington (1990) noted that, if educators "address only groups of people in lockstep classes, individual differences cannot be addressed" (p. 36). Consequently, the question arises, What educational opportunities currently exist and how can adult educators accommodate the learning styles of self-directed learning?

Involvement of Educational Organizations With Self-Directed Learners

"Today we are experiencing an unprecedented demand for effective adult education as the rapid proliferation of knowledge in our technological world makes continuous lifelong learning imperative"
(Billington, 1990, p. 31). However, few older adults participate in organized educational activities (Pevoto, 1989). Thus, most adult learning takes place through nontraditional educational opportunities rather than in formal educational settings. Penland (1979) stated:

It would appear that most adult learning undertaken for the creative use of leisure time (for "fun"), for human understanding, for citizen development, for advancing the quality of life will probably continue to be conducted outside the normal range of institutional support. The prevalence of self-planned learning will no longer be ignored. More and more people will recognize it as a valuable activity, and the concept of the learning society will become more generally accepted. (p. 178)

Lumsden (1987) elaborated on the reasons why adults are not significantly involved in formal educational practices. He determined that older adults are not involved in traditional educational activities because their interests have moved from traditional practices to nontraditional practices, such as self-directed learning. Lumsden also stated that formal educational practices may no longer serve the needs and interests of older adults. Thus, "older adults who enroll in educational programs will drop out if the learning activities and experiences in which they participated cease to meet their needs" (p. 15). Peterson (1971) also found that older people do not feel that traditional educational practices have relevance to their lives, especially because they do not need education. In addition to older learners' concerns about relevance, they may have a negative self-image as a learner when they are participating in an educational organization (Pevoto, 1989).
Consequently, older adults seek self-directed learning in order to address their needs and interests.

Numerous researchers have called for further research into the area concerning how educators and self-directed learners can work together (Brookfield, 1981a; Covey, 1980; Fishtein & Feir, 1992; Havighurst, 1976; Hiemstra, 1976a; Penland, 1979; Spear & Mocker, 1984). Hiemstra (1976a) asked, "How can the adult educator successfully intervene in self-directed, noninstitutionally sponsored learning" (p. 236). Fishtein and Feir (1992) elaborated further by adding that the future direction of adult education must result in coordinated efforts between older adults and institutions and agencies specializing in aging. Garrison (1992) noted that the challenge for adult education "is to integrate individual responsibility and shared control in the learning process" (p. 147). Finally, Covey (1980) suggested that educators redefine education not only as a life-long process but also as a great benefit to society as well as to individuals. Given that educators have placed such interest and demand upon further research into self-directed learning, it appears that self-directed learning is a vital part of many adults' developmental processes.

Self-directed learning is an integral part of many older adults' life-long learning process (Hiemstra, 1976b). At some point in a self-directed learner's pursuit of a goal, he or she will have some degree of difficulty accomplishing the task (Tough, 1979). Because self-directed
learning is vital to many older adults and because self-directed learning can be difficult, what can educators do to facilitate the learning process for older learners? Fundamental changes are required by formal educational institutions if older learners' special needs and interests are to be addressed (Brookfield, 1985a; Knowles, 1975). According to Barret (1993), "older adults are a ready audience who, for the most part, have not yet had the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of trained professionals" (p. 139). Thus, educators and educational organizations should determine what roles and opportunities are needed to facilitate self-directed learning for older adults and how educational organizations can accommodate older learners.

Methodology Literature

Qualitative research is a distinct form of research. Through the use of words, qualitative researchers describe existing contexts or situations. By contrast, quantitative researchers focus on a carefully planned situation by controlling and manipulating variables affecting the situation in order to observe the results (Cozby, 1977). For a researcher to implement a qualitative study, five basic aspects must be incorporated in the study.

To begin with, qualitative research is a way of examining human experiences in local contexts. The researcher must spend a great deal of time in the field studying events as they occur. The field experience
allows the researcher to see how certain situations develop within their natural context. The researcher must try to understand how a particular action can best be explained within a natural setting. Essentially, qualitative research assumes that the setting directly affects the action (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Next, qualitative research uses words rather than numbers to describe human experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The data collected from the field can be in any or all of the following forms: interview transcripts, participant and nonparticipant observation, photographs, videotapes, memorandums, and personal documents. The data collected are real-life examples of the action or situation being studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Through the use of words, qualitative research is used to explore focuses as well as outcomes. Qualitative researchers want to know how a situation or action came about, as well as the intended or unintended outcomes of a particular situation. They specifically want to know what the participants were thinking, feeling, doing, and perceiving during the situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Words, rather than numerical outcomes, are important.

Once data have been collected from field experience situations, qualitative researchers inductively analyze their data. They use grounded theory as a way to analyze the data. Grounded theory is generated from the data continuously as opposed to being stated prior to the gathering of
the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, grounded theory allows researchers to refocus continually and develop an emerging theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Finally, participant observers' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs are important concerns of qualitative research. The meaning the participant observer draws from a particular situation is critical to qualitative data. It is important to capture the perspective of the participants because it is from these inside perspectives that the researcher collates and cross-references data for validity. Thus, it is imperative that qualitative researchers utilize techniques such as videotaping, tape recording, and the collection of personal documents to reaffirm the individual's perception of the situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

In this study, a qualitative approach was used to look at possible ways in which learning projects can be facilitated by educational structures. A qualitative design was used to examine, analyze, and describe participants' opinions and beliefs about where they can gather information regarding their learning projects. This study was divided into distinct phases using the qualitative approach.

In qualitative research, it is important to obtain participants' perspectives to create an idea from data that originated from the participant and not from a predetermined theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1984). In this research, an informal survey of
individuals who were directly involved in learning projects was the principal method used in the first phase of the study. Thus, the individuals' responses reflected their opinions and beliefs about where they could gather information related to their learning projects.

The data collected in the second phase were "well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, pp. 30-31). After administering the survey to determine the sites where self-directed learners go to obtain information, the most frequently mentioned sites were visited. These sites were studied according to what they offer and provide older learners. Each site had different ways of facilitating older learners in their endeavors. As a result, various data-collection techniques were used to provide rich descriptions of the events, situations, and individuals involved within the site locations.

Information derived from the data collection resulted in the generation of explanations through the use of the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is the repeated method of combining information that is collected and analyzed (Glaser, 1978). Essentially, ideas were constructed from the analysis of recurring patterns within the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Specifically through the recurrent information, focus was placed on possible ideas about how learning projects could be aided by educational organizations. The process of gathering, analyzing, sorting, and comparing information was
repeated numerous times in order to validate the findings and yield theories.

Summary

The research as reviewed in this chapter has elaborated upon the definitions of self-directed learning, the stages of self-directed learning, the readiness of self-directed learners, the necessity of self-directed learning for older learners, and the inability of traditional educational organizations to successfully intervene in self-directed learning. Consequently, there is a need to determine what facilities or educational structures older adults use when pursuing self-directed learning activities. Descriptions of educational structures and the ways the educational structures are used by older learners in facilitating learning projects are necessary to guide traditional educational organizations in assisting older learners in their endeavors. Thus, this research directs traditional educational organizations to utilize educational structures needed and enjoyed by older adults.

A review of qualitative methodology of literature was presented in this chapter. The research highlighted the processes used in completing a qualitative study. In this study, a qualitative approach was used to examine, analyze, and describe educational structures perceived and used by older learners. The methodology for this study is presented in chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the roles of educational structures in initiating and facilitating older learners' self-directed learning projects. Self-directed learning has become a widely used method of learning for older adults. Many older adults, when pursuing their learning projects, do not seek traditional educational organizations to further their knowledge. "The number of older adults participating in educational activities is certainly not in keeping with the number in the population" (Pevoto, 1989, p. 1). Pevoto explained that the "barrier to participation in organized educational activities for many older adults is not lack of interest in education [as reported in the literature] but the lack of interest in the kind of education being offered when they can attend" (p. 11). To better meet the needs and desires of older adults, educators need to change the way they view older adults and learning projects. Therefore, detailed descriptions of the roles of educational structures in initiating and facilitating self-directed learning for older adults could prove invaluable in the redesign of the approach used by educational institutions to address the needs of older learners.
Given that self-directed learners at some point have difficulty achieving a desired learning goal (Tough, 1979) and that self-directed learning is an integral part of older adults' life-long learning process (Hiemstra, 1976b), the goal for this study was to describe ways in which educational organizations can facilitate the learning process for older learners.

A qualitative design was used to examine, analyze, and describe the educational structures based upon a study of older adults' experiences in the local contexts. As noted by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), a qualitative approach focuses on the rich description of people, places, and conversations, which is not easily done through the use of statistical procedures. Consequently, qualitative methodology focuses on individuals or groups of individuals who interact over a period of time. This description of qualitative methodology was congruent with the purpose and the phases of this study.

The primary data-gathering techniques used for this study included survey, interviews, observation, and artifact collection. Using several data sources, cross-referencing was done to validate and verify interpretations. The procedures used to carry out this study are described in this chapter. A description of the site, population, and methods is also provided. Data collection was divided into two distinct phases.
Site and Participants' Selection

Phase 1: Survey Site Selection

The initial survey sites selected for this study were all located in Tulsa County, Oklahoma. The sites were identified by consulting the Tulsa-area telephone directory for organizations that specifically involve persons 55 years of age and older. All sites listed in the directory were selected for this study. There were four sites, with each site offering some combination of classes, counseling, or social opportunities for older learners. All of the survey respondents from phase 1 were selected from the following organizations:

1. Hillcrest Center for 55+ (a department of Hillcrest Medical Center in Tulsa) serves approximately 19,000 individuals aged 55 years and over. The 55+ center addresses the education of older adults primarily in the areas of health and wellness. The facilities include a library and an exercise and nutrition center. In conjunction with the center, Tulsa Junior College sponsors classes for individuals interested in pursuing more education.

2. Golden Learning Opportunities and Workshop (GLOW) utilizes highly trained individuals to help Alzheimer patients practice memory retention and recall. GLOW works closely with nursing homes. In addition, GLOW provides workshops on various topics, such as
humor, complaints, and communication. GLOW serves approximately 2,000 individuals throughout the year.

3. Tulsa Senior Services serves more than 10,000 persons who are at least 55 years of age. Tulsa Senior Services provides services such as job programs, elder care, and companion care, which is called outreach.

4. Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has 2,765 volunteers who contribute more than 550,000 hours in the Tulsa area. Volunteers are placed according to their interests and the needs within the community. The volunteers are at least 60 years of age. In addition to providing volunteers, RSVP offers workshops on current issues, such as long-term care and Medicare. The topics of the workshops are typically based upon telephone inquiries and letters of interest.

Phase 1: Survey Respondents

In the first phase of data collection, a survey (see Appendix A) designed to identify the frequently mentioned sites where senior citizens gather information regarding learning projects was administered. The survey respondents completing the survey were selected from four sites: Hillcrest Center for 55+, Golden Learning Opportunities and Workshop (GLOW), Tulsa Senior Services, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Survey respondents were individuals who were at least 55 years of age and who were attending classes, social activities, or programs offered by the target sites.
The survey was administered to consenting clients at the four predetermined locations (Hillcrest Center, RSVP, GLOW, and Tulsa Senior Services). A total of 105 surveys was distributed (approximately 25 surveys per site) and collected immediately upon completion. Seventy-five surveys were returned; the surveys yielded a 71% rate of return. Each group of surveys was filed in a designated folder, which was labeled with the site name and dated.

Phase 2: Site Description

Once the survey was tallied, the most frequently mentioned places where older learners go to pursue their learning projects were identified. Three sites mentioned by most respondents are described below.

1. The Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was originally the home of oilman Waite Phillips and his family. The Philbrook was designed in the mid-1920s by architect Edward Buehler Delk in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The formal gardens surrounding the Philbrook are in the Italian Renaissance Revival style as well. The Philbrook houses several permanent collections, including Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings and sculpture, 19th-century French paintings, Wedgwood porcelain, British portraits, African- and Native-American art, ancient art, 19th- and 20th-century American art, prints, Asian art, and Southwest Asian ceramic tradeware. The Philbrook is a private museum and is not run by the City of Tulsa.
2. The Tulsa City-County Main Library has five floors of materials that are very accessible. The resources include books, periodicals, tapes, videos, compact disks, magazines, Community Information Services, and Technical Processing Service. This library is the central, or downtown, library within the Tulsa County Library System.

3. The Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa is the former home of the Thomas Gilcrease family. The Gilcrease family donated the house to the city in the 1930s. Thus, the Gilcrease is a city museum. It houses the largest collection of Western art in the country. Some 90% of this collection is in storage, but it is rotated on a regular basis to display the various pieces of art. The collection includes the works of Frederick Remington, Charles Russell, and Thomas Moran.

Phase 2: Interviews

During phase 2, interviewees were selected from the sites identified in the phase 1 survey responses (the Philbrook Museum, Tulsa City-County Main Library, and the Gilcrease Museum). Interviews were conducted with administrators and older learner participants at the three survey-identified sites. First, informal interviews with the directors of the frequently mentioned sites were conducted. Following the administrator interviews, participants were interviewed after a learning opportunity.
**Administrator interviews.** The purpose of the administrator interviews was to gather information regarding the program and the opportunities for learning, administrators, instructors, providers, and the participants of the survey-mentioned sites (Philbrook, Tulsa City-County Main Library, and Gilcrease). The administrators' interviews, which generally took 1 hour, were guided by seven questions. (See Appendix B.) Demographic information, site location, and date were recorded in the left margin of the field notes taken during the interviews. At least three administrator interviews were completed for each site. The administrators included the director of the program, museum, or library.

Depending upon the site, the directors identified other individuals such as directors, teachers, other service providers, or participants who would also be interviewed. Because these individuals had frequent contact with senior citizens or were themselves senior citizens, they were best able to provide information about older learners' attitudes, habits, and choices in relation to gathering information for learning projects.

The criteria for selection of interviewees were based upon administrative level and contact or involvement with older learners. Interviewees were either senior citizen learners engaged in a learning project or administrators, staff, and/or service providers working at a site used frequently by older learners for their learning projects. All of the interviewees had been employed in their current position for more than 5
years. One administrator had been employed in her position for 23 years.

*Participant interviews.* The participant interviews took place immediately after each class or learning opportunity. The interviews, which were informal, were directed by five questions and by spontaneous questions that arose out of the learning opportunity. (See Appendix D.) The information gathered during these interviews was not lengthy. Demographic information regarding the participant, the sequence of the class, and the date was recorded in the left-hand margin of the notes.

**Collection of Data**

**Phase I: Survey Data**

In the first phase, a survey was designed to gather the data that became the basis for phase 2. (See Appendix A.) The survey design was based upon Allan Tough's (1975) *Interview Schedule for Studying Some Basic Characteristics of Learning Projects.* The purpose of this survey was to identify frequently mentioned sites where the senior citizens gathered information regarding learning projects. Survey respondents were asked to answer three questions:

1. "Check from a list of places where you go to learn."
2. "Are there any other places that you go to learn?"
3. "May I contact you for further research?"
The phase 1 survey respondents completing the survey were selected from the four sites previously mentioned (Hillcrest Center, GLOW, Tulsa Senior Services, and RSVP). The respondents were volunteer participants from classes, social occasions, or other learning opportunities offered at the target sites.

The survey respondents answered the three questions concerning the places where they, as self-directed learners, gathered resources for their learning projects. The survey was administered to consenting patrons at the four predetermined locations (Hillcrest Center, RSVP, GLOW, and Tulsa Senior Services). The patrons were informed about the projects during a general meeting prior to their participation. One hundred and five surveys were distributed (approximately 25 surveys per site) and collected immediately upon completion. To determine the results, the survey questions were individually tallied. From a cross-reference of responses from each site, the three most frequently mentioned sites were identified.

Phase 2: Interview, Observation, and Artifact Data

During phase 2, a description of what learning activities occurred, how older adults interacted within the setting, and what the older adults did at the sites was gathered. The description of each identified site involved three data-collection techniques—interviews, observation, and artifact collection. The focus of this phase was to identify the
educational structures that aided in the development of self-directed learning projects.

Initially, the directors, staff personnel, and service providers each were interviewed for approximately 20 minutes. At least three professionals were interviewed per site. The interviews included seven generic questions (see Interview Schedule, Appendix B), which were designed to gather situation-specific data at each of the indicated sites. The interviews were conducted over a 4-month period from May 1993 to September 1993.

The interviews were conducted in an informal setting in order to encourage honest responses but were audiotaped to record the information as nearly verbatim as possible. During the interviews, field notes were taken to record the interviewer's impressions and further descriptions of the events. Throughout, respondents were asked to elaborate on information through spontaneous questions and probes, which were used to encourage them to clarify, expand, and explain further. This method was used to gain a better understanding of what transpired and to clarify information for the purpose of recording and transcribing.

Transcripts of the interviews with the professionals were stored in a computer. Printed copies were also kept in binders, which were categorized by the site where the interview took place. The interviews were coded and grouped according to site. Then the data from each site
were cross-referenced between sites. The information grouped was then chunked according to patterns or trends. Chunking is the act of looking for relationships between coded and grouped topics to determine if the topics fit together (Glaser, 1978). After the transcripts were coded, grouped, and chunked, a brief analysis was made in relation to the research questions. This, in turn, facilitated ongoing data analysis.

A second data source in phase 2--observation--occurred at each site and varied in length according to the nature of the event. A direct observation period was tied to each course or event offered at the sites. The classes and events ranged from 6 weeks to 3 months, depending upon the class and design. Thus, at each site a class or event was followed throughout its duration by observation of each class or event offered. A specific observation session ranged in time from 1 hour to 3 hours. For example, an art class was 3 hours in length, and a book review lecture lasted 1 hour. Observations for each site were made over a period from September 1992 to May 1993.

The total observation time per site included (a) 24 hours at the Philbrook site, (b) 22 hours at the Gilcrease site, and (c) 24 hours at the main library site. The observation hours do not include the hours spent in the completion of the administrator and participant interviews, collection of the artifacts, or administration of the surveys. Written documentation included the events, interactions between older learners and instructors, and the number of older learners.
Observation of individuals, classes, materials used, and activities was the primary focus. The purpose of each observation was to identify and describe educational structures in each learning situation that aided older learners in their pursuit of learning projects. During the observation session, a physical description of each site was made. In addition, a record of the events, individuals, and activities of the particular site was maintained. This record included the sources of information, the receivers of information, the setting, and the interaction among all involved participants and components.

After each observation session, reflections and impressions were recorded. This reflective portion of the observation sessions included an informal analysis of emerging themes and patterns and speculation to facilitate iterative data analysis. Analytical choices to refine, organize, and code all the data were made in such a way that patterns or trends could be examined and developed. The observations were initially grouped by site to determine any patterns or trends within each site. The data from each site were then cross-referenced between sites. The information grouped was then chunked according to patterns and trends.

To supplement the observation session, a follow-up interview with two or three event participants was conducted for clarification and verification of event happenings. Participant interviewees were not selected based upon any particular criteria. Rather, they were randomly chosen from among the participants. The interview questions for the
participants were based upon the events that occurred at the site. Participants were asked approximately five questions, depending upon the nature of the event.

The interviews were conducted immediately after an event in order to clarify or verify information gathered during the observation session. Through the use of probes and spontaneous questions, participants were asked to elaborate on, explain in detail, or substantiate an occurrence seen during the observation session. The participant interviews were written as nearly verbatim as possible. Following the same procedure as the administrator interviews, the transcripts of the interviews with participants were recorded and stored.

Finally, artifacts were collected to gain as much information as possible about what occurred at the particular sites. Artifact collection involved the gathering of information directly related to events at the targeted sites. This information was written, printed, published, or recorded from September 1992 to May 1993. Additional questions and topics for both the interviews and the observation sessions were generated through analysis of these documents. This step extended an emerging understanding of all that transpired at the targeted sites during the time noted above.

Data produced from the artifact collection were grouped by site. The actual documents were catalogued in a site binder. The data collected were then cross-referenced to facilitate data analysis and
comparisons. Finally, the information from the artifacts was analyzed in reference to the research questions through the interactive process of sorting, grouping, and collating information.

Coding for the interviews, observation sessions, and artifact collection was developed to correspond to the research questions: (a) What educational structures are perceived and validated by older learners in facilitating learning projects? and (b) In what ways are those educational structures used by older learners? The data were grouped, coded, and chunked according to the various trends and patterns that emerged. Although the chunked information initially identified closely resembled the research questions, new patterns, trends, and relationships emerged during data analysis.

Summary

Chapter 3 has focused on the design of the study. In particular, the site and the participant selection was developed. This included a detailed description of the phase 1 survey site selections and the phase 1 survey respondents. In addition, a description of the phase 2 sites was explained. The sites included a description of the Philbrook Museum, the main library, and the Gilcrease Museum. Next, site personnel interviews were delineated for phase 2.

Finally, the methodology of data collection was revealed. The collection of data contains a description of the phase 1 collection
procedures. The phase 1 procedures describe how the surveys were
tallied and cross-referenced to determine the most frequently mentioned
sites. Also, the phase 2 collection procedures are explained. This
description includes how the interviews, observations, and the artifacts
were collected, stored, and cross-referenced per site. The analysis of data
and findings determined in chapter 3 are presented in chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The procedures used for analyzing the data gathered during this study and a description of the findings are presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided according to the various data sources. The first section of data analysis is focused on the survey, the next on interviews, and the last on field notes.

Organization of Surveys

Phase 1: Survey Results

The results of the surveys were individually tallied by site and by questions. First, all of the surveys from Hillcrest Center were sorted by question, then surveys from the GLOW, Tulsa Senior Services, and RSVP sites were sorted accordingly. For each question, the number of recurring responses was tallied and listed per site. Next, responses from the sites were compared to each other. From a cross-reference of responses from each site, the three most frequently mentioned sites were identified. The results indicated that 34 of the participants visited museums (i.e., the Gilcrease and the Philbrook) and 47 of the
participants visited the Tulsa City-County Main Library. The museums yielded a 32% response rate of the total surveys administered, and the main library yielded a 45% response rate of the total surveys administered.

Analytical Organization of Interviews

After all of the interviews were completed, transcribed, and stored, each interview was analyzed according to site. Using the printed copy of the interview responses, each question was categorized according to the following research questions:

1. What educational structures are perceived and validated by older learners as facilitating learning projects?

2. In what ways are those educational structures used by older learners?

Responses to research question 1 were highlighted in blue, and those for research question 2 were highlighted in orange. This process was used for all of the interviews.

After highlighting the interview responses, the responses were regrouped according to color or research question. Information on this regrouping was stored in the computer. The new grouping was printed twice. The first copy went into the site designated folder, and the second copy was used in the construction of a matrix. (See Appendix C.) The purpose of the matrix was to facilitate a more visible overview and
comparison of the information from each site. For the matrix, the research questions were delineated in the left column, and the sources of information (administrators, participants, and artifacts) were placed across the top of the matrix. The highlighted section of interview responses for research question 1 was cut out first and then pasted onto the correct matrix box. For example, administrator interview responses that were highlighted in blue were pasted in the box marking the intersection of research question 1 and administrator interviews. The same process was completed for research question 2. The matrix was stored in the site-designated folder until all of the information gathered was analyzed.

After all of the administrator interviews were categorized, a matrix process was used to organize responses from participant interviews, observations, and artifact collection. The matrix for each site was analyzed for patterns and trends related to the research questions. A printed copy of the site patterns and trends, as they related to the research questions, was stored in the designated site folder. This process was completed for each site.

Finally, the patterns and trends were cross-referenced between the sites. Similarities between the sites and differences were identified. From the cross-reference, a list of recurring patterns and trends was made, as well as a list of differences. The two lists were stored in the computer, and printed copies were stored in each site folder.
Demographic information was recorded in the left hand margin of the notes.

Demographic information about the participant interviewees included age, gender, ethnicity, and learning intent. All of the interviewees were 65 years of age or older. The oldest individual was 82 years of age. Eighty-three percent of the interviewees were Caucasian. Women outnumbered the men 2 to 1; and finally, learning projects included such areas as gardening, concert piano, jewelry making, sculpture, and history.

Organization of Observations

After recording each of the observation sessions, the researcher transcribed the observations and recorded them in a computer. Two computer printouts were stored by site into a specific folder. A matrix of observation data per site was developed following procedures similar to the matrix development process described previously for interview data.

Description of Organization of Artifacts

The collection of artifacts occurred mainly during the administrator interviews. The administrators provided brochures, pamphlets, flyers, and handouts describing all of the learning opportunities at their sites. The number of artifacts collected per site ranged from 15 to 27. They were sorted according to site and placed in
designated folders. They were then sorted according to the type of learning activity.

By site, the artifacts collected were analyzed in relation to the research questions. The same procedures previously described for the analytical organization of the interviews and observations were used for analytical organization of the artifacts.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides a discussion of the educational structures, identified through data analysis, that aid older learners in the pursuit of learning projects. Analysis of interviews, observations, and artifacts at each site (main library, Philbrook, and Gilcrease) revealed four common patterns or trends of educational structures. The four patterns of educational structures included (a) accessible materials, (b) service-minded staff, (c) entertainment, and (d) teacher-directed learning.

The discussion of these patterns is divided into sections based upon site locations. Comparisons and contrasts of patterns between sites are presented.

Tulsa City-County Main Library

The administrators' interviews marked the beginning of the Tulsa City-County Main Library research and analysis. The four administrators interviewed included the director of the library, the
volunteer coordinator, the reader service director, and the outreach director. In separate interviews, each administrator made distinctive comments about older learners and the programs they attend.

The director of the library described older learners as "mainly readers, upper income, very knowledgeable, and vivacious." "They come here to participate in programs, in Elder Hostel, check out books, and in special programs/groups," according to the volunteer coordinator. The director of reader services stated that older learners mainly use "newspapers, the large print collection, books, and some computers." The director of the library added, "They attend such programs as Books Sandwiched In, Music Sandwiched In, and Travel with Tulsans."

According to the director of the library, older learners visit the library for this reason:

[they] feel comfortable in this environment, especially someone who has not been in a recent academic environment. We have an open university policy. This is a way to pursue endeavors by utilizing the trained and willing staff. All of the staff are service minded.

More specifically, Reader Services is a "service offered by the library to help individuals pursue their endeavors." The director of reader services added that older learners seek help when "using the computers, locating books, and seeking answers." The volunteer coordinator added that older learners can "attain an interpreter if they need one [the library can]; make special arrangements for people with physical disabilities."
The director of the library added that older learners go to the library for the availability of materials. They go to use large-print books, participate in various programs, and use the computer. In this regard, the director of reader services noted that "older learners come to the library because of the large collection of materials, familiar staff, and easy accessibility."

In addition to the administrators, the participants noted that the availability of materials was important. One participant stated,

I am a music student at Tulsa University. I like to listen and appreciate the opportunity to hear this series. So, I usually arrive a short time before the program to check the materials in the library and stay briefly afterwards to visit with the performers.

Another participant added, "In addition to enjoying the program, I take the opportunity to see what new books on tape are available and what books are available."

Some of the participants also stated that they go to the library for enjoyment. "I enjoy the music and the people," noted one participant. "I enjoy watching how the artist performs as well as having the honor of hearing music that has survived time. As a matter of fact, I play the piano myself." "I like the library programs where I can learn about music and great authors," added another participant. Four other participants stated that the programs were entertaining and educational.

The Music Sandwiched In series consisted of four performances by local artists spaced over a 6-week period. The first performance was
presented by pianist Betty Moses and narrator Edward Dumit, who performed Tchaikovsky's *Album for the Young*. Next was Terry Hoekstra, who performed selections from Mozart, Chopin, and Prokofiev. The third performance was a musical potpourri by violinist Jody Naifeh, pianist Dorothy McFadden, and string bass player Allison Gaines. Finally, Debbie Campbell sang songs made famous by jazz singers of the 1920s. The performances lasted an average of 43 minutes. Each performer was introduced by Wayne Smith, director of library activities. Sandwiches and coffee were available before the session began.

The observations of the Music Sandwiched In program revealed an educational structure of teacher-directed learning. The primary source of information came directly from the performer to the audience. The performer recited the history or context of the piece of music and talked about the life of the musician or the manner in which the music had changed over time. In addition, one performer gave her interpretation of a 1920s love ballad titled "Baby, Won't You Please Come Home?" The performers did all of the talking or performing and held the audience's attention with little or no interaction for a 43-minute average length of time. What little interaction occurred mainly consisted of applause, laughter, nodding, and smiling.

The artifacts collected consisted of 16 brochures and two magazine-like publications. Each of the 16 brochures focused on an upcoming or past event, series, or program sponsored by the library from
September 1992 to May 1993. The topics offered by the library were Music Sandwiched In, Books Sandwiched In, Volunteer Recognition Event, Voices and Visions, The Artist at Work, The Law in Your Life, Books After Dinner, Creative Writing Contest, Music With Commentary, Meet the Author, Hurray for Hollywood, Travel With Tulsans, and Great Decisions Series. In addition to the brochures, two issues of *The Open Book* were examined.

*The Open Book* is a newsletter published by the Tulsa City-County Library System and the Staff Association. The publication focuses on issues that concern the library. For example, an article in the second issue welcomes Mitch Adwon to the Library Commission. In addition, three articles feature different branch libraries. The two issues feature all library issues, such as honoring staff members for years of service, courses to be offered, pending lectures, speakers, and new materials to the library.

Several participants reflected that they used *The Open Book* or the brochures as a guide to facilitate their learning. One participant described the brochures listed above as a “quick reference for the pulse of the library.” He added that he used the brochures, found at a stand near the front desk, to find classes that focused on Russian literature and Baroque music. Another participant stated that she read *The Open Book* to see “what was new at the library.” This participant is a past library
commissioner, and she still likes to be informed regarding the library's direction, staff, and opportunities.

In summary, the main library administrators described older learners as avid readers, participants in programs, and unafraid to seek help from the friendly service providers. In addition, according to the administrators, older learners go to the library for the availability of materials. Older learners mostly enjoy the books, newspapers, and books on tape, and they utilize brochures and newsletters to further their knowledge of their learning projects by choosing courses, materials, or staff members to assist them.

The Philbrook Museum

The interviews with administrators were completed first. The three administrators interviewed included the curriculum director, the library director, and the director of pacers (the Philbrook volunteer collation). According to the curriculum director, older learners are "college educated and tend to be from the working group." Also, they are "interested in the tradition of Philbrook and in the history of art present [there]." In addition, older learners are often "referred to Philbrook by other artists or institutions like the Tulsa Historical Society."

The curriculum director added that older learners who come to the Philbrook tend to have a "focus project." For example:

Someone might bring a piece of art that he found in an antique sale. The participants may want to know more about it. It is a
learning process where they learn more about the individual painting, artist, or concept.

According to the library director, the older learners tend to use "books and periodicals the most," when researching their projects.

As older learners pursue their projects, they often need assistance. At the Philbrook, the library director helped to focus their search for information, tap the available resources, and make telephone inquiries on their behalf. The library director makes time available even in the evenings if a learner needs assistance during off hours.

In addition to researching information, older learners go to the Philbrook to acquire a skill. According to the curriculum director, they "attend lectures, films, Pacers meetings, museum classes, or [go to] the restaurant for lunch. Mostly they attend the afternoon painting classes or the watercolor classes." Older learners know that they can fulfill their goals either through classes, the library, or the exhibits.

Participant interviews, like the administrator interviews, revealed supportive information. Participants stated that they visit the Philbrook for the enjoyment of learning. "I come to talk to others and to listen to the presentations," said one participant. Another said, "I enjoy eating the good food, being with good company, nice surroundings, and a stimulating program." Still another participant stated, "I love the atmosphere, ambiance, and the art. Each new exhibit is an experience."
Also, four other participants stated that they too enjoyed the evening of entertainment and learning.

Not only did the participants enjoy a stimulating program, but they also used materials to help them in their endeavors. They used "books, videos, and collectibles" to further their studies. Some participants were studying the Baroque period, jewelry making, the city of Budapest, ethnic culinary experiences, and sculpture. "I will use the library to further research some jewelry techniques that fascinate and interest me. . . . I will return later to look through the books," noted one participant. One participant added, "I use the materials and literature sent out by the museum, and I do reading on points of interest."

The participant interviewees responded with numerous statements about the Philbrook's facility, staff, and courses. For example, one interviewee commented, "We enjoy the gift shop and the restaurant." Another stated, "I will use the [Philbrook's] library to further research some techniques [of jewelry making] that fascinate me and interest me." Finally, one participant noted, "I like the classes that are offered here. The instructors are informative and helpful."

The learners used the material resources that the museum offered and attended special exhibit events, such as the Food for Thought Series. The Food for Thought Series was designed to show, to demonstrate, and to allow participants to enjoy a particular exhibit. For example, two
events in the series were titled, "An Evening in Budapest" and "Paul Manship."

"An Evening in Budapest" was created to feature food, jewelry, and a jewelry-making demonstration from Hungary. The evening began with wine and food from Hungary; the menu included Vborks Salata, Crisrke Paprikas, Csípete, and Papacsinta Turos. Participants then moved to a tour and lecture on the Baroque Gold from Hungary. Finally, there was a jewelry-making demonstration in the art school, an event that lasted 3 hours. It then moved to a lecture format as the tour moved through the gallery. Participants did not hesitate to stop the tour and ask specific questions, such as, "How was this gold goblet used? It is so large and heavy looking." The tour guide carefully explained that the noble class measured success by how much gold they had in their coffers. The participants read the information on the walls and listened to the tour guide. The information for these evenings came directly from the tour guide or the art/demonstration teacher. No information was supplied to the participants apart from the answering of questions.

Like the "Evening in Budapest," the "Paul Manship" Food for Thought class focused on food and the art of Paul Manship, a 19th-century sculptor. The menu for the evening included grilled shrimp appetizer, spinach salad with orange poppy seed dressing, medallions of veal, and cheese cake with strawberries. The dinner began late due to
table seating and arrangement problems, thus causing the cocktail hour to extend almost a half hour longer.

The tour of the "Paul Manship" exhibit was conducted by Jannette Lawson, director of the Floyd Museum School at the Philbrook. She gave a detailed explanation of the sculptures and permitted participants to touch the sculptures. Specifically, most participants laughed and touched the baboon sculpture. The baboon was gesturing and posing as would a circus monkey. No one asked a question during the tour. After the 45-minute tour, the guests were ushered to the museum school.

Once in the sculpture studio, guests were permitted to watch Mary Frye, a sculpture teacher, and five of her students as they worked with clay. The students and teacher were sculpting a figure. A heavy-set live, female model wearing a rather small bathing suit was posing for the class. Many of the participants noted the skimpiness of the apparel by whispering and gesturing toward the model. The guests asked three questions, mostly about the techniques of sculpting. For example, one participant asked, "Ms. Frye, do you use the Lost Wax Method?" Frye answered his question at length.

In addition to noting the live model, participants of the "Paul Manship" evening commented on the food and on their enjoyment of learning about art. One participant stated that "the cocktail hour was not long enough" even though it had been extended. Another participant claimed that she "loved the evening. It is nice to be able to appreciate
fine art, in particular bronzes. I own two Remington bronzes [a premier Western sculptor]." Finally, one participant added, "I come to eat good food, enjoy good company in a nice surrounding, and listen to a stimulating program."

The artifacts collected at the Philbrook were limited. Most of the information about the Philbrook can be found in a museum school newsletter titled *The Floyd Museum School at Philbrook*. This newsletter, which is printed in the spring, fall, and summer, lists the studio programs and workshops for children and adults. According to the season, it features special events such as Art After School, Painting Field Camp, and Teacher Workshops. It also includes descriptions of the Food for Thought Series. During the Food for Thought Series, a guide for the evening containing the schedule and menu for the evening was handed out.

The other artifact was a pamphlet containing information about the tours offered at the Philbrook. This pamphlet contains descriptions of the types of tours available, including tours of the gardens, permanent exhibits, and special exhibits. This pamphlet is printed only once a year, and it lists all of the special exhibits for the year and the prices of admission for the exhibits.

Participants used the material published by the Philbrook as a reference to the events for the year. One participant stated that she designed jewelry. She uses the museum school newsletter to determine
what jewelry-making courses and lectures she wants to attend. She noted, "I was thrilled to see that Philbrook was having a Food for Thought evening focusing on Baroque jewelry." Another participant uses the tour pamphlet to take tours of the gardens during the spring. He stated that he loves to garden, and he particularly likes the spring pond tour.

In summary, the Philbrook Museum offers unique learning opportunities for older learners. According to the administrators, older learners come to the museum because of its history, the permanent art collection, and the Floyd Museum Art School. Older learners usually have a focused project in mind. For example, they might want to know more about a piece of artwork, art technique, or an artist. Generally, the participants use the newsletters and pamphlets as resources for finding their subject areas of interests.

When pursuing their project, older learners often needed assistance. The director of the library at the Philbrook offered guidance and direction. When learning about their project, older learners at the Philbrook attended classes and researched using periodicals and books.

The participants of the learning opportunities at the Philbrook reflected that they enjoyed the unique experiences and social interaction. They took pleasure in the culinary flavors, the stimulating program, and the ambiance of the evenings. They particularly delighted in the opportunity to see the famous art collection being presented and the
experience of seeing the same style of artwork being created in the Floyd Museum school.

*The Gilcrease Museum*

Three administrators were also interviewed for the Gilcrease. The administrators interviewed were the curator of education, the library curator, and the director of Gillies. The curator of education described older learners:

> Average age is 65. Volunteer group. Some never worked before. We cater to individuals who can come during the day. Older group can come and have a strong desire to help/participate. Also, they are very well read. Some have history backgrounds. Good number of men are involved (⅓ are men). They know their stuff. They are interested learners who come to learn and be highly academic.

The director of Gillies added that the Gilcrease has "a high percentage of volunteers who are retired teachers (history) and older men who are retired executives. They are piqued with interest by continuing their teaching in some way. The museum has a heavy interest in history."
The library curator echoed these descriptions, but added that the older learners who come to the library for information are "very talkative." She stated that sometimes she had a hard time "curbing" the conversations.

Older learners use the Gilcrease in a variety of ways. Some come to research information, to see the exhibits, or to be a volunteer. "Many of the Gilcrease volunteers are retired teachers who would like to continue learning about history or art," said the curator of education.
Those who give tours sometimes seek help from the curator of education, who stated, "They write up scripts. We check them." In preparation for the tours, the volunteers are required to read three books a year to maintain information about the collection of Western art housed at the Gilcrease. The curator of education helps them with books and materials for this purpose. They are required also to attend an 8-week training session taught by the volunteer staff to learn about the Gilcrease collection.

If the learners come to research information, then the curator of the library assists them with materials and resources. The curator explained that, "usually, telephone referrals come first. Then, they come in. I've prepared the material/guides to help them. I make sure they know the rules concerning the rare materials." The older learners' questions start off "very general (I'm interested in Cherokee Indians). I help them focus their research by using probing questions." According to the library curator, most use genealogy references and Native-American material.

The participant interviews revealed that the older learners enjoyed seeing the Western art. "I came to see the artists' work that I have heard of," stated one participant. Another participant declared, "I came to renew my sense of where I came from, historically." Another participant added, "I'm just enjoying the works of art. I like the small placards"
describing the origin and name of the artist." Finally, one participant said, "My group, we're going to walk 'till we drop!"

The observation of six tours took almost 2 months to complete. The format for the public tour was always the same. The tour began at 2:00 p.m. and lasted approximately 1 hour. The guide always met the tour group in the first gallery. The three other tours were similar in format to this tour, and two special tours were also observed.

The special tours started at 1:30 p.m. and 10:55 a.m. The second tour ended with lunch at 12:00 noon. The first special tour was of the library and the rare material housed there in addition to the gallery tour. The special tours gave participants the opportunity to see, study, and read the rare material housed in the restricted library storage room. The rare books, maps, and etchings of the Gilcrease collection are stored in the restricted storage room.

The library curator wore gloves and shared rare books with the group. She carefully turned the pages of books and maps. She showed four sets of cross-section displays of letters from Andrew Jackson at the Hermitage and used a book about Thomas Moran with original Moran pictures. The eight participants looked at each rare piece with their hands folded behind their backs. Collectively, they asked seven questions. They were given lengthy responses to their questions. For example, one participant asked, "Is humidity a problem for the rare books and materials located here?" Another participant asked, "How
come Mr. Gilcrease collected these Bibles when his main focus was Western art?" Finally, a participant inquired about researching a topic. He said, "If I am interested in studying about Thomas Moran in more depth, may I come back and review these materials?" The curator stated that she would be happy to help and to assist him with further research. When asked later about his question, the participant said that he was studying Thomas Moran because he had always liked the breadth and scope of Moran's panoramic landscapes.

The artifacts collected at the Gilcrease included two pamphlets and three brochures. The two pamphlets were Older Volunteers: A Valuable Resource and Museum Opportunities for Older Persons. Both are published by the American Association for Retired Persons. Each is a guide designed to help in the enlistment of older persons for volunteering in both the public and private sectors of a community. The pamphlets focus on recruiting, training, evaluating, and placing older learners within a community service opportunity. The pamphlet Museum Opportunities for Older Persons specifically addressed ways in which older learners could assist museums, such as providing tours, cataloguing museum items, labeling exhibition pieces, and assisting museum staff in the gift shop. One participant stated that she had always wanted to be a museum curator. Once she saw this pamphlet, she knew that she could at least assist with the curator's responsibilities.
The two brochures included discussions of learning opportunities at the Gilcrease. Each of these brochures is published by the Gilcrease. The first, titled *Speaking Of*, described the free public educational opportunities at the Gilcrease Museum. The second brochure featured the Gillies. It is a brochure to enlighten potential volunteers about the Gillies' program and format. Each of the participants interviewed stated that they felt the Gillies brochure accurately conveyed the intensity and structure of being a volunteer or guide for the Gilcrease Museum.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to describe educational structures that aide in the initiating and facilitating of older learners' self-directed learning projects. Information was collected from older learners and their education providers.

The findings indicate that four patterns or trends were present at each site. The four patterns included (a) accessible materials, (b) service-minded staff, (c) entertainment, and (d) teacher-directed learning. These four patterns were discovered through analysis of the administrator interviews, participant interviews, observations of learning opportunities, and artifact collection.

Generally, the findings from both the administrator interviews and participant interviews highlighted the accessible materials available at the site, the service-minded staff capabilities of each site, and the
entertaining quality of the learning opportunities of the site. Administrators and participants indicated that older learners enjoy entertaining educational opportunities that are supported by the staff and resources of the site. Specifically, they enjoy the assistance of the staff and particularly use books as their independent source of information.

The observation of learning opportunities revealed the teacher-directed learning style of the older learners. Little interaction was evident between the source of information (presenter/teacher) and the receiver of information (older learner). The presenter or teacher was the primary source of information for older learners during the educational opportunities. The little interaction that occurred consisted of applause, nodding, laughing, and smiling. Several questions were asked during the tours at the Gilcrease and the Philbrook. These questions were not open-ended or theoretical. The answers were brief, and most were factual.

In addition to the four recurring patterns and trends, each site revealed unique patterns or trends. For example, the data from the Philbrook indicated that learning opportunities provided the chance for older learners to socialize. The Philbrook also offered a gourmet meal with additional social and gathering time. Furthermore, it utilized its well-trained staff to give information about a subject as well as to demonstrate how that subject was created or formed. Many older
As for the Gilcrease, many older learners go there for the largest and most exceptional Western art collection in the nation. Accessible materials and the service-minded staff provide many opportunities for older learners to gather an extensive amount of information about their learning projects. Older learners can take courses, give tours, research the archives, and discuss topics with the staff.

Finally, in the case of the Tulsa City-County Main Library educational structures provided an opportunity for older learners to listen actively. Older learners like to gather information by listening to a lecture. At the main library, they tend to prefer to attend a 1-hour, 1-day per week lecture series. A teacher-directed learning opportunity provides a quick and informative learning opportunity for older learners.

Analysis of the three sites revealed four patterns and trends that recurred at each site. The four patterns or trends were accessible materials, service-minded staff, entertainment, and teacher-directed learning. In addition to the four patterns or trends, each site embodied unique patterns. For example, the Philbrook Museum offered social time, the Gilcrease Museum provided an extensive Western art collection, and the Tulsa City-County Main Library provided a teacher-directed learning opportunity.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This study described what educational structures are perceived and validated by older learners as facilitating learning projects and in what ways those educational structures are used by older learners. To answer these questions, this study involved two distinct phases of research. During phase 1, a survey was administered to approximately 100 older learners at four organizations for senior citizens. The survey was designed to identify the most-frequented sites for gathering information related to older adults' self-directed learning projects. The results of the survey revealed three sites where older adults gather information.

Qualitative methodology was used in phase 2 of this study in order to describe the educational structures of each identified site. The descriptions of each site involved the data-collection techniques of interview, observation, and artifact collection. Analysis of the administrator interviews, participant interviews, educational opportunity observations, and artifact collection revealed four patterns and trends common to each site. These patterns or trends included accessible materials, service-minded staff, entertainment, and teacher-directed learning style.
Review of Findings

A review of the findings as they relate to the research questions revealed four clear-cut educational structures that are perceived, validated and used by older learners. They include the following:

Accessible Materials

Older learners prefer learning situations that offer numerous reading materials before and after a class, course, or learning opportunity. In addition, they seem to prefer the opportunity to use the print materials.

The administrator interviews revealed that older learners tend to read books, periodicals, large print materials, and listen to tapes. All three sites offered materials that focused on the lecture topic. During the observation sessions, many participants were checking out books or reading materials either before or after a learning opportunity. Furthermore, older learners used the brochures and the pamphlets as a reference for pending learning opportunities.

Service-Minded Staff

Older learners feel comfortable in a user-friendly environment—especially those who have not recently been in an academic setting. By utilizing trained and willing staff, older learners can better attain their goals, and they often express a willingness to use the “service-minded staff.” Older learners seem to seek answers to their questions from the
“service-minded staff.” For example, they came to the library wanting more information about a piece of artwork, or they wanted to study the rare Bibles located only by a staff member.

Entertainment

Older learners enjoy interesting programs such as music, art, history, travel, literature, and current events. As noted by the interviewed administrators, older learners mainly attend the book lectures, music series, art classes and demonstrations. Also, older learners enjoy socializing with others before the learning opportunity. These conditions provide an entertaining opportunity for older learners.

Teacher-Directed Learning Opportunity

A teacher-directed learning opportunity involves a knowledgeable professional. Older learners like to be involved with professionals who do their jobs well. During teacher-directed learning activities, the interaction between the performers and the audience mainly consisted of a one-way communication path from the performers to the audience. The performers did all of the talking and performing. The audience responded with laughter, applause, and pleasing facial expressions. Thus, older learners tend to be passive listeners.
Interpretations of Findings

During data collection, numerous impressions and feelings emerged regarding interpretations of the findings. First, a description of older learners based upon the data sources was developed. Specifically, most of the older learners who frequented the targeted sites were very knowledgeable and vivacious and preferred to learn through reading and presentations. These learners enjoyed books, tapes, and periodicals. They were voracious readers; however, they were not casual readers. They read deeply and for substance, to fulfill their purpose in learning.

These older learners, also for the purpose of learning, attended the presentations that were focused on their areas of personal interest. Before the presentations began, they were quite sociable, enjoying the company of their fellow participants, who were individuals of all ages. None of the sites deliberately targeted older learners; instead, the sites encouraged persons of all ages to attend.

In addition to the description of older learners, four patterns of educational structures preferred by the older learners were identified. These four patterns were accessible materials, service-minded staff, entertainment, and teacher-directed learning. First, the older learners wanted to be able to use and find the materials that they were seeking; they wanted the materials to be accessible. Some of the learners used the computer to help locate the materials; others sought assistance from staff personnel. The older learners seemed to appreciate and enjoy using the
rare materials at the Philbrook and the Gilcrease. They also liked the comprehensive selection of material, including large-print books, at the main library.

The older learners seemed to enjoy browsing for accessible materials before and after a presentation. The main library often provided a selection of materials outside the presentation hall that was focused on the topic of the presentation. Several participants noted that they enjoyed looking through these materials. The Philbrook library also set up a special selection of books reflecting the museum's current exhibit. Many of the Philbrook participants knew to check the Philbrook library for additional information. The Gilcrease, however, permitted learners the privilege of studying the rare materials located in the library storage room. The participants at the Gilcrease respected the privilege of using and enjoying the rare materials, and they all sought the privilege of using the rare materials because the materials helped them with their goals.

In addition to the accessible materials, the older learners appreciated the resources of an institution to aid in their learning endeavors. They appreciated the staff members who catered to their needs and desires. The main library offered special services for individuals who had disabilities, and both museums offered special tours for persons with disabilities.
The staff at the targeted sites not only aided older learners, but they also offered learning opportunities that aided the learners in their individual pursuits. Specifically, the staff at the targeted locations were quick to list learning opportunities that older learners enjoyed and in which they participated. None of the administrative respondents from any of the sites claimed to cater to older learners, but each could recall specifically which presentations and performances the older learners had attended. The administrators of the sites seemed to believe that they offer special opportunities that older learners greatly enjoy. They felt that they are fulfilling a need of older learners' because the high attendance records reflect the older learners' interest.

Furthermore, the older learners often indicated that they enjoyed the history and tradition of the institutions. Many learners, who might have been new to the institutions, stated that the reputation and tradition of the site lured them to visit. This was especially true at the Gilcrease and the Philbrook. Each of these museums has remarkable collections. The Gilcrease has the largest collection of Western art in the country, and the Philbrook has an impressive collection of religious and 19th-century art.

Apart from the tradition and history of the sites, the older learners also chose the sites because they offered learning opportunities that appealed to them. Numerous participants stated that they came to the presentations because they were entertaining. The older learners enjoyed
the social aspects of the opportunities as well as the subjects or topics presented.

From the observations of the presentations, it was apparent that the older learners enjoyed mingling with fellow participants. None of the sites had assigned seating. Instead, Food for Thought at the Philbrook allowed participants to choose their tables and companions for the seated dinner. In this environment, participants were friendly and outgoing, with most of the conversations centered on their interest in the topic of the evening.

The most entertaining aspect of the learning opportunity was simply the topic. For example, at the main library, the attendance grew with each performance of the Music Sandwiched In series. Like the participants at the Gilcrease and the Philbrook, the participants at the main library stated numerous times that they came to enjoy the performances and the performers. When Debbie Campbell sang, there was a record attendance. Participants had to stand in the back of the room and along the walls of the room. Her performance may have been so well attended because she has performed elsewhere. Many older learners cannot and do not like to travel at night, so that would make it difficult for them to attend Debbie Campbell's evening performances. Also, her style of music is more likely to appeal to this cohort because she sings music from the 1920s.
At the Philbrook, many older learners knew that they could learn a skill. They found it entertaining to attend the classes or presentations focusing on the desired skill. The older learners particularly enjoyed watercolor and oil painting classes, which were offered during the day. They also liked the Food for Thought series, which included discussion of the exhibit and demonstrations of the skills necessary to make the exhibit artwork.

The events attended were entertaining and were usually held during the day when it was easier for older learners to attend. All of the main library offerings were during the day, mostly at mid-day. All of the Gilcrease's opportunities were offered in the afternoon, and the Philbrook offered classes during the day as well. However, the Food for Thought series was presented during the evening. This may have been less of a problem for the older learners because the Philbrook is a neighborhood museum and is not located in the metropolitan part of the city. The older learners generally did not have to drive on the highway or go through downtown at night to attend performances at the Philbrook.

Finally, the educational style of the learning opportunities was similar at each of the sites. Each learning opportunity offered an event that utilized the teacher-directed learning. This educational style consisted of the source of information's giving solely to the receivers of the information. There was very little interaction between the performers or teachers and the participants or students. This may be
true for a variety of reasons. One reason is that teacher-directed learning is the only method tried at the sites. Another reason may be that it works best for short classes attended by individuals with varying degrees of knowledge about a topic. Teacher-directed learning eliminates the time-consuming task of educating those who have not already studied, read, or researched the topic before the class. It lets the professional do his or her job with little interference.

The most interaction occurred at the Philbrook during the Food for Thought series. It appeared that the less formal approach to teacher-directed learning there allowed participants to feel free to ask more questions about the topic. The Food for Thought series was less formal because of the social opportunity during cocktails and dinner, which preceded the lectures and demonstrations. Participants seemed to be more relaxed and convivial during the lecture and demonstration than at the Music Sandwiched In series at the main library.

Implications

Although the results of this study are context-specific, the implications provide insight into where older adults go to pursue their learning endeavors and why they go to these educational institutions. The findings indicate that there are several structures or characteristics that educational institutions can embody to facilitate older learners'
learning projects. These structures can be applied to numerous educational settings.

The main library and the Philbrook Museum provided reading and listening materials before the lectures, and materials pertaining to the lecture were always located on a display table. In addition to having accessible materials, two of the targeted sites offered materials for perusal before and after the class or presentation. Many of the older learners greatly appreciated this service because it allowed them to gather additional information without having to come at another time. It also provided another means for the oldest learners to collect information that they could study privately at a later time. With this in mind, educational institutions should offer supportive material before and after classes as another way of aiding older learners in their endeavors.

Some of the older learners used the computers to locate books and tapes, but they rarely used the computer to locate video material. Other older adults needed assistance from the staff. These learners preferred to seek assistance in locating material rather than pursue the material on their own. This was especially true at the main library.

It is important for any educational setting to provide older learners with the necessary assistance, whether it be by computer or by support staff. Older learners need to be made comfortable in a learning environment. Many have not been in a formal learning environment in many years, and many of the older learners' educational needs have not
been met in traditional educational practices (Lumsden, 1987; Peterson, 1971).

Recommendations for Future Research

After focusing on the educational structures of settings that facilitate older learners and their needs, several areas were identified where additional research may be necessary. Additional research is warranted to determine if older learners attend different sites for certain information and not one site for all their information. Older learners may attend one type of site for situation-specific information, or they may attend another site for all their information. Also, it would be interesting to determine whether the participants at one targeted site attended lectures and performances at another site.

Determining if the participants attend several of the sites might reveal whether or not they are of the same economic, social, or age category. It might also clarify whether or not certain types of learners avail themselves of the educational learning opportunities at particular institutions. Such research could indicate whether older learners are part of a small or large minority group, based upon their demographics or their style of learning.

In addition to researching more information about learners and where they go for information, it is also recommended that research be undertaken to determine whether the teacher-directed educational style
is the best strategy for teaching older learners. It might be interesting to learn whether the teacher-directed approach is the only method used, or if other approaches have been used with little success. In other words, why do educational institutions use the teacher-directed method?

Summary

The interpretation of findings discussed what are educational structures and how these structures appeal to older learners. We know that older learners become involved in self-directed learning through curiosity about a subject, object, event, or activity. They pursue their interest through reading, activities, courses, and lectures. Most importantly, when they seek additional knowledge about their subject, they use books, periodicals, and listening tapes. Thus, older learners prefer that educational structures include accessible materials.

Older learners like educational structures that provide an entertaining opportunity to hear their subject. They attend lectures or courses that enlighten and stimulate. In addition, a setting that provides a comfortable learning environment appeals to older learners.

Older learners prefer that their seminars incorporate teacher-directed learning. They respond little during small group courses, lectures, or tours. Older learners seek knowledge in a concise and one-dimensional communication method.
Finally, older learners enjoy the help of a service-minded staff. They like the one-to-one interaction and help. They will seek out assistance with their learning projects from a helpful and knowledgeable staff. They may seek assistance initially to gather data or information for further independent study later. They like to socialize before and after a learning opportunity.

Finally, it is recommended that further research be implemented to answer the following questions:

1. Do older learners go to only one institution to gather information?
2. Do older learners only attend learning opportunities where the teacher-directed approach is used?
3. Is the teacher-directed approach the only method used with older adults?
APPENDIX A
SURVEY
Introduction: My research is about the learning projects of senior adults. Learning projects are deliberate efforts to learn something, or to learn how to do something. Perhaps you tried to get some information or knowledge or to gain new skills or improve old ones--or to increase your sensitivity or understanding or appreciation. Examples of learning projects might include learning about gardening, stamp or art collecting, horse racing, wood working, Russian literature, or any topic of personal interest to you.

1. Please check the following places that you have been to pursue your learning project.

- Museum (specify)
- Library (specify)
- Religious (specify)
- Activity Center (specify)
- YMCA
- Gardening Center (specify)
- Community Organization (specify)

Please tell why you went to these places. Be sure to specify if you feel that the location met or assisted you in fulfilling your needs.
2. Are there any other places that have not been identified?
Please list and explain why you chose the location.

3. Would you mind if I called you to ask you more about your learning projects? If you do not mind, please write your name and telephone number.
APPENDIX B

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1. Describe the types of older learners who come to your center. (Approximately how many?)

2. What do these older learners do when they come here? Why? (Describe examples of learning projects.)

3. How do you help them pursue their purpose for coming here? (Specific.)

4. What type of assistance do older learners ask for? Why? (Examples.)

5. How long do older learners stay here, and what days do they generally come? Why?

6. Are there any materials or resources that they use more than others? Why?

7. Why do you think they come to your center?
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
(Example)

1. What is your purpose for coming here?

2. How do you fulfill your purpose in coming here?

3. Is there anyone or anything that aids you in your purpose?  
   (List.)

4. Are there any materials or resources that you use more than others?

5. How long do you stay when you are here?
APPENDIX D

CONCEPTUALLY CLUSTERED MATRIX
## Conceptually Clustered Matrix for Gilcrease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Sources</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Interviews:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletters:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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