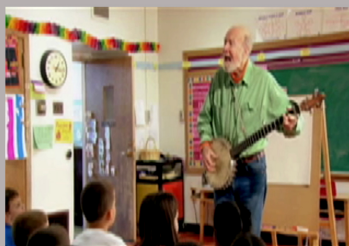


CREATIVITY AND AGING THROUGH THE LENS OF FILM

A Media Literacy Curriculum Kit



Creativity and Aging Through the Lens of Film

by
Sox Sperry



www.projectlooksharp.org

Providing materials, training and support to help teachers prepare students
for life in today's media-saturated world.



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Mission Statement

Project Look Sharp is a not-for-profit, mission-driven initiative committed to providing teachers with the training and materials they need to integrate media literacy, critical thinking and 21st century learning into the curriculum.

Project Look Sharp provides staff development workshops and consulting.

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Creativity and Aging Through the Lens of Film

All materials can be accessed for free on our website and are also available through mobile non-Internet based versions viewed on a digital media device. Digital devices include a master PDF as well as all specified media within lesson folders purchased from the Ithaca College Bookstore.

Access the bookstore through our website.

Linden Center for Creativity and Aging

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Creativity and Aging Through the Lens of Film

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OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

Creativity and Aging Through the Lens of Film

Overview

This curriculum kit provides college professors with the materials and background information for engaging students in a dynamic and constructivist process of learning how older adults remain creative as they age. It uses film clips as a means to explore five themes relating to creativity and aging:

Mentoring – Transmitting wisdom from elders to younger people;

Music – Engaging with music in later life as performer, composer, conductor or critic;

Preserving Cultural Tradition – Passing on lineage traditions to the next generations;

Relationships – Relating to others and to one's own aging process;

Service – Committing to community service as a lifetime discipline.

These materials were developed for use in gerontology/aging studies and psychology courses, but they can also be used in other disciplines including anthropology, sociology, film, music, and communications.

In addition to questioning social views related to creativity and aging this curriculum invites students to ask critical questions relating to media literacy. Students are invited to consider both the content and the form of media-constructed messages. Documentary and feature film clips become a means to engage visual and auditory learners who might traditionally be less inclined to participate in class discussion.

Following an initial pilot of this curriculum one Introduction to Aging Studies professor affirmed the viability of this intent: “The students responded enthusiastically and were quick to offer their opinions and views about the film clips. Despite the fact that I had never done anything like this in the classroom before, the discussion was easy to facilitate using the tools you provided...I heard from students who have never contributed to class discussions in the past.”

Linden Center For Creativity and Aging

This curriculum is the result of a collaboration between Project Look Sharp and the Gerontology Institute, both programs of the Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies (DIIS) at Ithaca College. The Linden Center for Creativity and Aging exists within the Gerontology Institute of Ithaca College to encourage research, creative expression, model programs, student internships, and public education on creativity in the late stages of the life course.

While focusing on the arts, the Center is built on the premise that an aging society brings opportunities for innovation in many academic disciplines. Thus it will support work on creativity across all disciplines of the college with particular emphasis on emerging areas of knowledge. The Linden Center seeks to serve as a nationally visible academic resource for addressing the relationship between aging and creativity and the opportunities that creativity among older persons provides to individuals, communities, and society.

OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

How to Use these Materials

Each of the five thematic presentations includes a **Discussion Guide**. The **Presentation Introduction** introduces the theme and provides context to help students to answer the probe questions. The **Film Introduction** gives brief background information for each film and context for the specific excerpt. **Further Questions** ask students to apply their general knowledge of the topic and of film construction to each film clip.

Possible Answers are included as model evidence-based responses that address key concepts. However, there is rarely one right answer to any of these interpretative questions, and the professor should encourage multiple readings (interpretations) of the same scenes, and different types of evidence to back them up. **Further Questions** are suggested for each film as well as **Summary Explorations** for the entire theme as a means to deepen exploration of the topic and the media literacy understandings related to the theme.

The curriculum also includes an **Overview** for each theme including objectives, vocabulary, film clip titles and times, materials needed, approximate time to cover material, and (recommended) process. **Student Handouts** and **Student Readings** are included for each theme. In addition there is a four-page **Introductory Reading** on the general topic of creativity and aging as represented in film that can be assigned prior to beginning the series.

The time it takes to deliver these presentations will vary depending upon the prior knowledge of the students, the experience of the professor with this format and these materials, the number of further questions asked, and how many of the film

clips the professor uses. Although professors may need a smaller number of film clips to use, they should avoid the temptation to sacrifice student interaction for content coverage. The power of the film discussions emerges when students actively apply their knowledge, identify evidence, articulate their interpretations, analyze authorship and point of view, and discuss meaningful issues. If professors do not have the time to do all of the films for one theme, it is recommended that they select fewer film clips rather than try to cover all of them in a lecture format.

Additional Sources

In addition to the six student readings included in this kit, supplemental readings may be assigned from the reference list appearing on pp. 81-86. The following is a list of other recommended readings for faculty, in particular those by Cohen and Yahnke:

Cohen, G. D. (2000). *The creative age: Awakening human potential in the second half of life*. New York: HarperCollins.

Cohen, G. D. (2005). *The mature mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: HarperCollins.

Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.) (1999). *Handbook of creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, W. H. (2004). *What are old people for? How elders will save the world*. Action, MA: VanderWyck & Burnham.

Yahnke, R. (2005). *Heroes of their own stories: Expressions of aging in international cinema*. *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education*, 26, 57-76.

OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

Media Literacy and Democratic Citizenship

The founders of the United States articulated the need for a literate citizenship as core to the development of a deep and enduring democracy. We live in an age when the most influential messages about pressing social issues and events are delivered through mass media, such as television, magazines and the Internet. Most students use the Internet as their primary source of information, yet few have any formal training in assessing the credibility of information in web sites. It is essential to the success of our democracy that young people consciously and consistently analyze and evaluate media messages. They need to be taught to seek out current, accurate, and credible sources of information; they need to understand the influence of media messages on their understanding of the world; and they need training in identifying and using various techniques for communicating messages in different media forms. Without these critical skills, we risk losing the diversity and freedom of thought that underpins a culture of true democracy.

Collective Reading of Media Messages

This curriculum is based on the classroom practice of collective reading, in which the teacher leads the class through the process of decoding images, sounds and text as a way of developing a range of critical thinking skills while teaching core knowledge. This constructivist approach encourages the development of moral reasoning as students clarify their own interpretations, listen to the analyses of their peers, and discuss ethical issues. Decoding of the documents in this curriculum will help train students to distinguish fact from opinion, analyze point of view and identify bias, interpret

historical documents, and use evidence to back up a thesis. The classroom decoding process is particularly effective in involving students who rarely share their opinions about print-based material, including students with reading disabilities, visual learners, and students for whom English is a second language. The teacher should consider calling on students or going around the room to ensure participation by all students in the collective reading process.

Encouraging Multiple Readings

Although the Teacher Guides for each lesson include possible answers to the questions, the teacher should encourage multiple readings and a diversity of responses for most of the questions posed. It is important that students give evidence in the document to explain their conclusions. Occasionally a question has only one right answer (e.g., “who created this video?”), and students should learn to distinguish between objective and subjective questions. The suggested answers given in the scripts are intended to reflect typical responses that address key historical and media literacy concepts and information. However, it is important that students recognize that all people do not interpret media messages the same way. Depending upon each reader’s background, including life experience, age, gender, race, culture, or political views, he or she may have very different interpretations of a particular text. The collective reading experience provides the opportunity to explore these differences and discuss the important concept that readers interpret messages through their own lenses.

Reading Bias

A major theme of these materials is the recognition that all media messages come from a particular point of view and have a bias that reflects the intent and perspective of the producer and sponsor. With these materials, teachers can train students to recognize bias and point of view. The teacher should encourage students to ask critical questions about any media messages encountered inside or outside the classroom using the *Key Questions To Ask When Analyzing Media Messages* found at www.projectlooksharp.org.

Bias in this Curriculum and in the Classroom

This series of lessons, like all media, also has a point of view and a bias. As professors use the lessons, they may identify opinionated language, selective facts, missing information, and many other subjective decisions that went into constructing this view of history. The same questions the curriculum applies to other documents can be applied to this media construction: Who produced this curriculum for what purpose and what is its bias? Professors and students could and should be asking critical questions about the editorial choices that went into constructing these lessons. When using these materials professors will make their own decisions of what to include and to edit, what questions to use and what issues to avoid. All of these decisions, both by the creators and users of the curriculum, will influence the view that students receive. Professors should encourage students to thoughtfully analyze and discuss the stories, the perspectives, and the biases celebrated and criticized within our own classrooms. Those skills and practices are core to an educated democratic citizenship.

Additional Resources

For more information about media decoding download these documents from the project Look Sharp web site:

- *Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages*
- *Core Principles for Media Literacy Education*

Also, a general guide for document decoding appears in the Sources and Resources section this kit titled: *Tips for Decoding Media Documents*.

Fair Use of Media Documents

The classroom critique of political and cultural documents such as these film excerpts is essential to the development of core literacy skills in our media saturated democracy. To enable educators to fulfill the mission of teaching these core civic objectives, Project Look Sharp has created media literacy integration curricula using a variety of different media documents for critical analysis in the classroom.

The documents in this curriculum are presented for the purpose of direct critique and are solely to be used in an educational setting.

For more information about fair use in Media Literacy Education, go to the Media Education Lab at Temple University at www.mediaeducationlab.com.

What is Creativity?

Introductory Reading

*Be brave enough to live creatively.
The creative is the place where no one else has
ever been.*

- Actor Alan Alda

Dr. Gene Cohen, director of the George Washington University Center on Aging, is perhaps the world's foremost expert on creativity and aging. He oversaw a pioneering study on creativity and aging and wrote two seminal works on the subject, *The Creative Age: The Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life* and *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*. Cohen defines creativity as "the process of bringing something new into existence, available everywhere" (Cohen, 2005, p. 169). This definition suggests that the capacity for creative discovery is available to all of us, irrespective of age, if only we seize the opportunity.

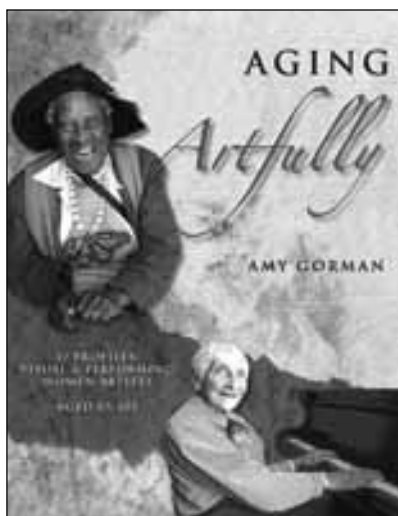
Cohen's research demonstrates that creativity is an essential component to living well as one ages. He uses psychologist Howard Gardner's concept of "Big C and Little C" creativity to further explain the meaning and practice of creativity. Big C creativity applies to the

extraordinary accomplishments of great artists, scientists and inventors. Possessors of Big C creativity that appear in this curriculum include nonviolent activist Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, composer Duke Ellington, artist Tasha Tudor, and potter Margaret Tafoya.

Little C creativity applies to the "diversity of everyday activities and accomplishments" by "ordinary" people who may never become famous but are nonetheless extremely creative in their pursuits (Cohen, 2005, p. 169). Possessors of Little C creativity that appear in this curriculum include activist Ruth Ellis, surfer and catamaran designer Woody Brown, African fife player Otha Turner, and the members of the Young at Heart chorus.

Psychologist Erik Erikson, in his book *Vital Involvement in Old Age*, argued that many people mistakenly believe that they have no inherent creative ability. He suggested that such a misconception comes from cultural conditioning coupled with an educational system in which arts education is often given minor importance. Erikson believed that in fact creative artistic expressions should be seen as "a welcome source of vital involvement and exhilaration," especially in later life (Erikson, Erikson & Kivnick, 1986, p. 318).

While many people assume that creativity is about *making* something new, Dr. John Krout, director of the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, reminds us that "Creativity is a very broad concept and can include *learning* new things as well as *doing* new things" (Krout, personal communication, May 24, 2009).



**What messages
about creativity
and aging does
this book cover
communicate?**

Creativity Supports Healthy Aging

We have all heard stories of famous people who have exercised creativity well into later life. Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals at the age of 78. Michelangelo sculpted at 89. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote law on the Supreme Court at 90. Martha Graham choreographed new work at 96. And Grandma Moses still painted when she was 100. Krout noted the 21st century research that affirms the Little C benefits behind the stories of these Big C exemplars:

Many people don't realize how important creative pursuits are to their well-being, especially as they age. While a relatively new area of research, we are finding an increasing number of studies that demonstrate the power of creative activities as an outlet that increases health and well-being among a range of older populations.

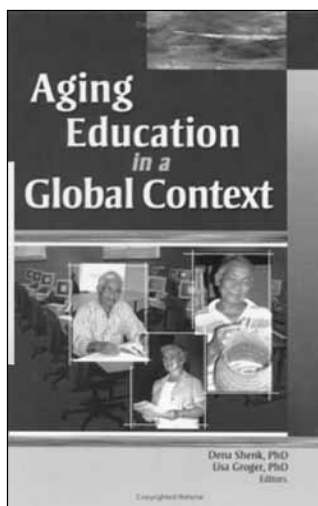
(personal communication, May 24, 2009)

These recent studies include Cohen's 2006 study of 300 people ages 65 to 103, half of whom participated in community arts programs and half of whom did not. He found that the

arts program participants experienced better physical health, had fewer falls and scored better on loneliness and depression measures (Cohen et al., 2006).

Cohen's study was the first to employ an experimental design with a control group to confirm results. Since Cohen's research other researchers have arrived at similar conclusions in their studies of creative elder populations. In 2007 researchers Joan Jeffri and Doug Heckathorn released the results of a study of more than 200 visual artists aged 62-97, most of whom "demonstrated personal growth, creativity, self-efficacy, autonomy, independence, effective coping strategies...and also maintained extensive social networks" (cited in National Center for Creative Aging, 2009). Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi interviewed people in their seventies who had been highly creative in their youth. He concluded "often their interest had broadened to include larger issues; politics, human welfare, the environment, and occasionally transcendental concerns with the future of the universe" (cited in Vaillant, 2002, p. 240).

These studies have sown a harvest of initiatives to support creativity and aging. In 2001 the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) was founded to foster an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging and to develop programs that build on this understanding. In 2005 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) sponsored a Mini-Conference on Creativity and Aging, which was followed in 2008 with a grant initiative entitled "Creativity and Aging in America." The Gerontological Society of America, the National Council on Aging, and the American Society on Aging have all recently offered articles, webinars and speakers on topics related to creativity and aging.



What do the title and cover design tell you about the target audience for this book?

Depicting Creative Elders in Film

There is a fountain of youth; it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you will learn to tap this source, you will have truly defeated age.

- Actress Sophia Loren

No matter how old you get, if you can keep the desire to be creative, you're keeping the child inside alive.

- Director John Cassavetes

Is maintaining creativity throughout older life an example of defeating age as Sophia Loren suggests? Is it preserving the child within as John Cassavetes says? Perhaps creative aging is simply a way to accept growing old by inviting the elder self to express the creativity within. Sadly many people accept the myths and prejudices that mark the "older one" as the "no longer creative one." This is especially true in the entertainment industry.

In her book *The Fountain of Age* author Betty Friedan interviewed a wide range of people



How does this poster challenge stereotypical beliefs that older people have lost their creative spark?

who have bought into these myths which she terms the "age mystique":

Even so-called creative professionals can be induced by the age mystique into premature retirement...I encountered vital able Hollywood screenwriters and directors in their fifties and sixties, with successful comedies, series and dramas behind them, who decided to "get out of the industry" because twenty-seven-year old editors or program vice presidents "don't even see me," "can't hear what I'm saying," "don't get the meaning somehow" (Friedan, 1993, p. 212).

This title of a 1997 article in the academic journal, *Sex Roles* makes the case that this "age mystique" is often coupled with the feminine mystique as well: "The Aging Woman in Popular Film: Underrepresented, Unattractive, Unfriendly, and Unintelligent" (Bazzini et al., 1997).

Of course there are exceptions to the "age mystique" prejudice in Hollywood. Elder actors and actresses have won their share of Academy Awards. Jessica Tandy won the Best Actress Oscar at the age of 80. Katherine Hepburn won three of her four Oscars after she turned 60. Director Clint Eastwood won the Best Director Oscar at 62 and again at 74.

One important way to challenge the stereotypes that suggest that older people are not creative is to make sure that older people are depicted in the media in ways that demonstrate creativity. A pioneering study of positive treatments of creative elders in film was undertaken by Robert Yahnke, professor of Film and the Arts at the University of Minnesota. His research was published in the journal *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education* with the title "Heroes of Their Own Stories: Expressions of Aging in International Cinema" (Yahnke, 2005).

Turning the Camera on Imagination

The goals of the curriculum *Creativity and Aging Through the Lens of Film* are strongly reflected in Yahnke's article:

Aging across the life course, in international cinema, is based upon three straightforward themes: childhood and adolescence is a time for mentoring by elders; middle age is a time for resolving mid-life crises (with the assistance of elders), and old age is a time for expressing one's wisdom and equanimity through contributions to the wider community. In other words, the life course in international cinema is based upon the strengths and positive values of active elders, who are an integral part of family and community contexts...

These films offer students of global aging an opportunity to comprehend the experience of aging from the elder's perspective. Film has the power to convey complex, three-dimensional images of old age... Using film as an adjunct to theories about global aging can help students more clearly grasp the individuality and idiosyncrasies of old age. (Yahnke, 2005, p. 59)



Why might the webpage designer have chosen this photograph for the central placement on this webpage?

This awareness of the role that film can play in deepening society's appreciation for the creative opportunities in aging has given rise to new films, film festivals, college courses and to this curriculum. In February 2009 the First International Film Festival on Aging was presented by the Pacific Institute and the AgeSong Senior Communities. Its home page described the intention of the festival organizers: "The work our organizations do advocates for a humanistic society that accepts and celebrates the richness of our Elders. The films in our Festival help to challenge and change the outdated notion that our twilight years are years of decline, and presents alternative views that illustrate that these years can also be vibrant and rewarding" (<http://filmfestonaging.org>).

In 2009 a new film, *The Creative Power of Aging*, was under production by the Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network. The Ithaca College Linden Center for Creativity and Aging now offers courses, exhibits and workshops for community elders and college gerontology majors in the areas of Performing and Visual Arts and Literary and Media. For creative elders and their young followers the second decade of the 21st century is shaping up to be a time of both affirmation and celebration.

The world we live in today — our language, art, music, literature, drama, and technology — was brought into being by thousands of generations that recognized the true worth of human longevity. We possess culture because our ancestors had the wisdom to distinguish vigor from value. They saw, as we so often do not, beyond mere physical strength and grasped the virtues hidden within the necessity of growing old.

- William H. Thomas
What Are Old People For?

Creativity in Mentoring

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OVERVIEW



Video Clips

Creativity in Mentoring

Objectives:

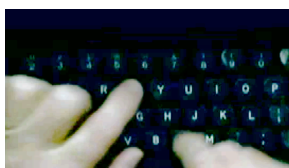
Students will:

- review perspectives on creativity in mentoring by elders
- reflect on their own beliefs about the mentoring process
- recognize the power of words, images and sound to influence a target audience
- analyze diverse storytelling techniques to convey messages

Vocabulary:

mentor, mentee, Mussolini, Romeo and Juliet, Pablo Neruda, metaphor, Monet, Ravel, Tadd Dameron, bebop

Media



Finding Forrester
(3:59)



Tea With Mussolini
(1:40)



Il Postino
(3:22)



'Round Midnight
(4:03)

Materials Needed:

- Six page *Discussion Guide*
- Four video clips (access online or via Mentoring digital media folder)
- *Student Reading* on Mentoring (a copy for each student)
- *Student Handout* (a copy for each student)

Time

Approximately 50 minutes

Process:

The *Student Reading* should be given out beforehand for students to read prior to class (or during class). Introduction (background) material in the *Discussion Guide* can be summarized for the students prior to viewing the video clips, and students can complete the *Student Handouts* during or after each clip (individually or in pairs). The *Questions & Possible Answers* are designed to facilitate leading the decoding of the film clips, while *Further Questions* and *Summary Explorations* can be used to discuss the power of film to communicate messages, and to deepen the students' understanding of creativity in the context of mentoring by elders.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Video Clips

Theme: Mentoring

Before Class: Review information in the *Overview* to the *Creativity and Aging* kit; make copies of the Student Reading (one per student) and Handout (number will vary depending on the process used – see below).

Student Reading: Assign to be read for that day's class (or have them read it in class before introducing the film clips); you may want to recap or discuss some of the main points prior to the film decoding and/or incorporate some of the information into the film discussion and further questions.

Presentation Introduction

This discussion uses the relationship of mentor and mentee or protégé as a means to explore creativity in aging. It explores various forms of mentoring relationships between adults and children and between elders and younger adults. In each of the relationships portrayed there is the added dynamic of differences in language, race or culture (as well as age).

After you view each excerpt you will be answering some questions on a handout that ask you to reflect on the messages related to creativity and aging and on the filmmaking techniques used to convey these messages. In most cases the film excerpts that you will see are part of longer productions by different filmmakers. They are not meant to show the full story as told in the much longer works from which they are taken.

Student Handout: Students can complete the handouts individually or work together in pairs. There should be one handout for each film clip shown.

Film Clips: Read the brief introduction to each film excerpt and then play the clip; provide enough time for students to write out answers to the questions and then lead a discussion using the *Media Sample Questions & Answers* guide. Probe for a range of answers, asking students to give specific evidence from each clip to back up their answers (see *Tips for Decoding* in the Resources section of this kit). *Options:* lead discussion without having students complete handouts; show all four film clips with students writing responses, then lead discussion.



Finding Forrester

Film 1 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2000 feature film *Finding Forrester* directed by Gus Van Sant and starring Sean Connery as the famous reclusive author William Forrester and Rob Brown as his protégé Jamal Wallace. In this scene Forrester is helping Jamal with a writing assignment for his high school English class.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What creative approaches does Forrester take toward mentoring Jamal?

Possible Answers: He commands Jamal to sit down and write from the heart without thinking. When Jamal is blocked Forrester gives him a writing sample to copy in order to get into a writing rhythm in search of his own words.

2) In what ways can you see the mentor's influence on the younger person?

Possible Answers: In Jamal's ability at the end of the clip to begin writing his own words with increasing speed and confidence.

3) How does the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: He uses darkness as a metaphor to represent both confinement and release. The dark shadows within Forrester's apartment represent his seclusion while Jamal's final writing of dark words (dark tunnel, deep black night) represent his release into his own creative power. The music mirrors the scripting as Forrester's creative writing burst is backed with quick-paced free jazz while Jamal's halting efforts are backed with slow and quiet strings.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Why might the director have chosen to use an old typewriter rather than a computer as the primary focus for this scene?
- » What do you notice about the relationship between mentor and apprentice?
- » Who are the mentors who have been important in your life?



Tea With Mussolini

Film 2 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1999 feature film *Tea With Mussolini* directed by Franco Zeffirelli, set in pre-World War 2 Italy. It stars Joan Plowright as Mary Wallace, the English guardian of a young Italian boy, Luca, played by Charlie Lucas. In this scene Ms. Wallace is introducing Luca to the work of Shakespeare.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What creative approaches does Mary take toward mentoring Luca?

Possible Answers: Rather than simply reading and discussing Shakespeare she uses a puppet stage and a paired reading/acting of the play to teach about Shakespeare and enduring love.

2) In what ways can you see the mentor's influence on the younger person?

Possible Answers: Luca offers rapt attention to his mentor as she sets the scene. He asks questions for clarification and adds his own understanding, all suggesting a deep respect for and engagement within the learning/teaching relationship.

3) How does the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: He focuses attention on the central message of love by having Mary pull the light shade down above the small stage – lighting both Luca and Mary, and Romeo and Juliet, in an intimate glow. In scripting Luca's observation that "vario" means variable Mary is allowed to deliver the central teaching: "Juliet knows that true love is not vario. It lasts forever. It's the most important thing in life."

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » This plot is said to have been loosely based on the director's own life experience. Discuss the creative choice to use artistic expression to explore one's own past.
- » Discuss choices in musical soundtrack and prop selection to enhance meaning.
- » Are there people that you have mentored? If so, how did you bring creativity into the process?



Il Postino (The Postman)

Film 3 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1994 Italian feature film *Il Postino (The Postman)* by Michael Radford. The film stars Philippe Noiret as exiled Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, and Massimo Troisi as Mario Ruoppolo, the postman who delivers mail to the writer. In this scene Mario wants to engage Neruda's help in his effort to court the affection of Beatrice, the local waitress for whom he has fallen.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What creative approaches does Neruda take toward mentoring Mario?

Possible Answers: He recites a poem about the sea and then explains that Mario has invented a metaphor as he describes his feeling upon listening to Neruda's poetry.

2) In what ways can you see the mentor's influence on the younger person?

Possible Answers: Mario seems to feel free to follow his own poetic insights as the famous poet shares some of his own verse. In answering Neruda's questions and responding to his observations Mario's own creative spirit awakens.

3) How does the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: The setting and central image of this scene is the sea. The filmmaker begins and ends with the backdrop of the sea while inserting the subtle soundtrack of wave on rock as the two men speak about metaphors related to the sea.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Mentors often support their efforts with questions. What questions does Neruda ask Mario in an effort to further the teaching?
- » Discuss the actors' use of gesture and body language in helping to define the role of mentor and mentee.
- » Discuss whether mentoring provides reciprocal benefits for mentor and mentee.



'Round Midnight

Film 4 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1986 feature film, *'Round Midnight*, directed by French director Bertrand Tavernier. The film stars Dexter Gordon as Dale Turner, a U.S. jazz musician living in France, and Francois Cluzet as Francis, his young admirer. This scene appears near the end of the film as Dale leads his fellow musicians in a rendition of his final composition.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What creative approaches does Dale take toward mentoring Francois and the younger musicians?

Possible Answers: He uses spare and exact language and fluent hand gestures to convey meaning, in the first instance by signaling the tempo at the start of his new melody and later in his appreciation of Monet in the comment "all the colors. He sounds like Ravel or Tadd Dameron, like bebop."

2) In what ways can you see the mentor's influence on the younger people?

Possible Answers: The younger musicians and Francis all listen to and look at Dale with deep attention and apparent appreciation. Francis plays Dale's new record for him, acknowledging his affirmation of Dale's talent and influence.

3) How does the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: In the first scene he provides information about setting, character and mood without any audible dialogue by skillful editing of clips of small groups in the club (musicians, servicemen, father and daughter). He infuses the centerpiece soundtrack of Dale's music throughout in various forms – in rehearsal, performance and on record.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » In the film Dale Turner's character struggles with the effects of chronic alcoholism. Discuss how substance use can impact creative potential.
- » What opportunities exist in your community for mentoring by someone of another nationality or culture?
- » Discuss the opportunity and challenge of cross-cultural mentoring.

SUMMARY EXPLORATIONS

- » Reflect on the demonstrations of creativity you have seen – creative writing, theater, puppetry, poetry, music and poster design.
- » Which creative expressions do you most relate to? Why?
- » Reflect on the acts of mentoring you have seen. Which of the mentor/mentee relationships do you most relate to? Why?
- » Which of the audio and visual storytelling techniques were most effective? Why?
- » In what ways have you yourself used creativity in mentoring a younger person?
- » What elders came to mind repeatedly as you reflected on these film excerpts? Were they acquaintances or famous figures?
- » What is required for a successful mentoring relationship?

Creativity in Mentoring

Background Reading

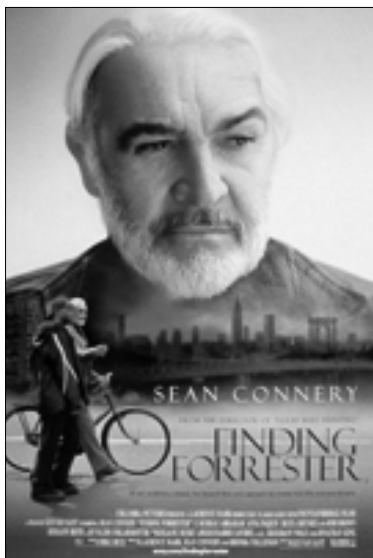
Elders as Mentors

No thinking - that comes later. You must write your first draft with your heart. You rewrite with your head. The first key to writing is... to write, not to think!

- Forrester to Jamal
in *Finding Forrester*

International films portray older adults who have functioned as mentors, aged in place, drawn people to them, and fought to maintain the values of their community. They have lived within the context of old traditions and unchanging ways. The old have been tested by experience; they are survivors, negotiators, and realists. The old have reached an understanding that the individual is nothing unless he or she is part of the community.

- Robert Yahnke
Heroes of Their Own Stories



What messages about mentoring does this DVD cover communicate?

In the 19th century poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "The greatest gift is a portion of thyself." A century later this practice of intergenerational giving was labeled "generativity." Psychologist Erik Erikson used the term to refer to an older person's need to contribute to the next generation by the act of mentoring or nurturing and guiding younger people. In his book *Vital Involvement in Old Age* Erikson suggested that elders may experience a child's creative accomplishments as the vicarious reward for their own mentoring of that child (Erikson et al., 1986, p. 82).

Dr. Gene Cohen described the impact of mentoring on older people in a way that stretches beyond family and vicarious experience. In *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain* he wrote that intergenerational contact provides stimulation and rewards for strangers as well as family. He suggested that relationships such as mentoring help to support elders' capacity to enhance existing relationships and to build new ones. He referred to this capacity as "social intelligence" and suggested that it is one form of intelligence that usually improves with age (Cohen, 2005, p. 116).

Author Mark Gerzon examined the symbolic importance of intergenerational mentoring in his book, *Coming Into Our Own: Understanding the Adult Metamorphosis*:

Elders know something that those of us in other stages of the life cycle need to understand; they possess something that the generations following them need. Within their bodies and minds, at the core of their very beings, true elders embody the gift of life. Just as newborns archetypally symbolize hope and new beginnings, those who are closest to the end of the life cycle symbolize wisdom and wholeness (Gerzon, 1992, p. 194).

Affirming our Need to Protect Elders

In 2002 the United Nations World Assemblies on Aging heard testimony from gerontologist Robert N. Butler who presented a Declaration of Rights of Older Persons that was jointly drafted by his Intergenerational Longevity Center and the Yale Law School Clinic. The Declaration began with a clear statement of elders' role as mentors to the young:

In spite of the fact that our elders have historically served as guides and mentors of the generations to follow, they are seldom provided the same rich opportunities for social, cultural and productive roles as other groups, and are instead frequently subjected to discrimination, as well as physical, sexual, emotional, and financial exploitation, both in society, as well as their own home. (International Longevity Center, 2008)

Dr. Butler's understanding of the connections between intergenerational relationships and social justice is reflected at the university level in course offerings such as *Multigenerational Relations* and *Social Justice* at the University of Washington School of Social Work and the Community Justice Project and Elder Law Practice group at the University of St. Thomas Law School.



What techniques did the artist use to communicate the meaning of mentoring?

Alongside the efforts of these community and academic institutions, the medium of film provides an avenue to affirm elders as mentors. In 2005 Robert E. Yahnke, Professor of Film & the Arts at the University of Minnesota, published the results of his study of elder mentors in film in an essay entitled "Heroes of Their Own Stories: Expressions of Aging in International Cinema," which was published in the journal *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*. The study included 14 feature length films from around the world with the aim of "providing gerontologists with models of successful aging that portray elders as being valued within the context of community" (Yahnke, 2005, p. 57). One of the films in the study, *Tea With Mussolini*, is included in this curriculum.

Dr. Yahnke concluded that films like these provide an opportunity to illustrate the essential role that elders play as role models and as catalysts initiating life change for young people, middle-aged adults and for their communities. He argued that as elders "age in place" or grow older within particular communities, they provide a bridge to the younger generations. This mentor's bridge can lead to an affirmation of the values that maintain unity within community. He concluded:

In each of these examples, elders play significant roles in helping the young make the transition from either childhood to adolescence or from adolescence to adulthood. The old listen, inspire, teach, affirm, accept, sacrifice, and challenge the young to let go of the past, resolve old hurts, form new and diverse family bonds, accept their own shortcomings, and embrace new and unsettling ways to view the world. (Yahnke, 2005, p. 65)

NAME _____

DATE _____

Title of Film Clip: _____

- 1) What creative approaches does the elder take toward mentoring?
- 2) In what ways can you see the mentor's influence on the younger person?
- 3) How does the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, and soundtrack.)

Creativity in Music

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OVERVIEW



Video Clips

Creativity in Music

Objectives:

Students will:

- review perspectives on creativity and aging in music
- reflect on their own beliefs about creative expression and aging
- recognize the power of words, images and sound to influence a target audience
- analyze diverse storytelling techniques to convey messages

Vocabulary:

Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Billy Strayhorn, Ry Cooder, Omara Portuondo, Ibrahim Ferrer, Nicolas Slonimsky, musicologist, lexicographer, fakir

Media



Masterpiece By Midnight
(2:42)



Buena Vista Social Club
(4:08)



The Mind: Aging
(2:50)



Young At Heart
(3:47)

Materials Needed:

- Six page *Discussion Guide*
- Four video clips (access online or via Music digital media folder)
- *Student Reading on Music* (a copy for each student)
- *Student Handout* (a copy for each student)

Time

Approximately 50 minutes

Process:

The *Student Reading* should be given out beforehand for students to read prior to class (or during class). Introduction (background) material in the *Discussion Guide* can be summarized for the students prior to viewing the video clips, and students can complete the *Student Handouts* during or after each clip (individually or in pairs). The *Questions & Possible Answers* are designed to facilitate leading the decoding of the film clips, while *Further Questions* and *Summary Explorations* can be used to discuss the power of film to communicate messages, and to deepen the students' understanding of creativity in the context of music.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Theme: Music



Video Clips

Before Class: Review information in the *Overview* to the *Creativity and Aging* kit; make copies of the Student Reading (one per student) and Handout (number will vary depending on the process used – see below).

Student Reading: Assign to be read for that day's class (or have them read it in class before introducing the film clips); you may want to recap or discuss some of the main points prior to the film decoding and/or incorporate some of the information into the film discussion and further questions.

Presentation Introduction

This discussion uses the art form of music as a means to explore creativity in aging. It presents documentary films that profile both world-renowned experts in their field, as well as amateur musicians. The forms of musical expression include voice, piano, and guitar as well as composing and conducting.

After you view each excerpt you will be answering some questions on a handout that ask you to reflect on the messages related to creativity and aging and on the filmmaking techniques used to convey these messages. In most cases the film excerpts that you will see are part of longer productions by different filmmakers. They are not meant to show the full story as told in the much longer works from which they are taken.

Student Handout: Students can complete the handouts individually or work together in pairs. There should be one handout for each film clip shown.

Film Clips: Read the brief introduction to each film excerpt and then play the clip; provide enough time for students to write out answers to the questions and then lead a discussion using the *Media Sample Questions & Answers* guide. Probe for a range of answers, asking students to give specific evidence from each clip to back up their answers (see *Tips for Decoding* in the Resources section of this kit). *Options:* lead discussion without having students complete handouts; show all four film clips with students writing responses, then lead discussion.



A Masterpiece By Midnight

Film 1 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2001 documentary film series *Jazz* by Ken Burns. This ten-part series traces the history of jazz music from its beginnings in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century. The piece you will see is from the last chapter entitled *A Masterpiece By Midnight*. Duke Ellington was one of the pioneers who, along with Louis Armstrong, appeared in nearly every episode of the series.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) In what ways does Duke Ellington demonstrate creativity?

Possible Answers: He continues to compose music after the death of his long-time collaborator, experimenting with new musical forms. He plays the piano, appears on television and in concert.

2) How does his creative outlet seem to affect his ability to adapt to the challenges of aging?

Possible Answers: By staying engaged with music as his “mistress” Ellington takes the opportunity to focus on his continued creativity while living with cancer and looking forward to the next tune, “the one coming up tomorrow.”

3) What choices has the filmmaker made to heighten dramatic interest in the story? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: He uses a constantly changing mixture of visual and audio forms to keep the viewer engaged. He intersperses still photos - many with the patented Burns technique of moving in or out on a particular image - with video images, both contemporary interviews in color and archival black and white TV footage. Ellington’s music runs beneath it all.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » How does the title of this segment, *A Masterpiece By Midnight*, relate to the theme of creativity and aging?
- » What kind of actions might one take in response to this profile? Might those actions be different for a 20 year old than for a 70 year old?
- » Describe an elder you have known who has chosen music as a means to creative expression.



Buena Vista Social Club

Film 2 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1999 film, *Buena Vista Social Club* by Wim Wenders. The film follows musician Ry Cooder on a trip to Havana, Cuba in search of musicians who had performed at the famous nightclub in the 1940s. The first scene occurs in a recording studio in Havana while the concert footage is taken from a subsequent tour in the United States.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) In what ways do the vocalists Omara Portuondo and Ibrahim Ferrer demonstrate creativity?

Possible Answers: In their individual and combined attention to both performance and staging. On stage they begin on separate sides of the stage, come together to dance and end with Ibrahim offering Omara his handkerchief to wipe her tears following a song about hiding one's tears.

2) How does the creative outlet seem to affect their ability to adapt to the challenges of aging?

Possible Answers: The lyrics of their chosen song as well as their performances emphasize love and human connection, which seems to summon in them strength, confidence and happiness.

3) What choices has the filmmaker made to heighten dramatic interest in the story? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: The filmmaker plays with contrast moving between the bright colors and circling camera of the studio scenes to the muted colors and steady gaze of the live performance. All the while the same song continues, woven seamlessly between studio and live performance.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What did you notice about the interconnections between the generations of musicians (elders, middle-aged and young)?
- » Discuss the filmmaker's choice to cut between two takes of the song, in the studio and in performance, rather than to stay with just one version of the song.
- » Describe an elder you have known who has sustained creativity in love and relationship.



The Mind: Aging

Film 3 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1988 PBS series *The Mind* directed by Lisa Jackson. The section you will see is the first part of the episode entitled "Aging." It focuses on musicologist, composer and conductor Nicolas Slonimsky.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) In what ways does Nicolas Slonimsky demonstrate creativity?

Possible Answers: He is able to think quickly on his feet in improvisational settings as on a live radio show or performing a piano piece he hadn't played in 20 years. He conducts a concert in the evening and then performs at home using an orange to depress the piano keys.

2) How does the creative outlet seem to affect his ability to adapt to the challenges of aging?

Possible Answers: His quick wit and dexterity of both fingers and memory seem to help him be both "self-possessed" and able to consider aging without "taking myself too seriously."

3) What choices has the filmmaker made to heighten dramatic interest in the story? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: She uses unscripted encounters to demonstrate his capacity to perform, musically and conversationally, and includes his own admission of a missed note and explanation about how he covered his mistake to demonstrate his sharpness rather than simply commenting on it.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » The filmmaker uses the pre-dawn traffic lights at two points in the clip. What purpose do they serve?
- » Why might the filmmaker have chosen to present Slonimsky in the radio station and at home rather than on stage for the evening performance referenced by the radio announcer?
- » Have you known other creative people in their nineties? If so, how have they expressed their creativity?



Young at Heart

Film 4 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2008 documentary film, *Young at Heart* directed by Stephen Walker. The film follows the Young At Heart chorus as they rehearse and perform contemporary and classic rock music. In this scene the chorus performs Bob Dylan's song, *Forever Young*, shortly after they have received news of the death of one of their members.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) In what ways do the chorus members demonstrate creativity?

2) How does the creative outlet seem to affect their ability to adapt to the challenges of aging?

3) What choices has the filmmaker made to heighten dramatic interest in the story? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: By alternating vocals they face the opportunity and challenge to find harmony between their individual styles and the group effort.

Possible Answers: The performance shortly after hearing the news of their friend's death demonstrates in a concrete way the maxim, "The show must go on." Their raised arms and audience hugs suggest that uplifting spirits and human connection continue regardless of age.

Possible Answers: The filmmaker cuts between the chorus and the audience whose emotional responses throughout the performance bring drama to the scene. The setting of a prison yard also heightens the tension as the chorus turns a place of captivity into a site of sanctuary.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What emotions came up for you as you viewed this clip?
- » What are the benefits and risks for the filmmaker in making a film requiring several years of preparation based on central actors who are old and some in ill health?
- » Do you know of any performance groups composed primarily of elders in your community? If not, how can you find them?

SUMMARY EXPLORATIONS

- » **Reflect on the demonstrations of creativity you have seen. Which creative expressions do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **All of these films were documentaries. Can you think of feature films that portray older adults who are creative in the performing arts?**
- » **Which of the audio and visual storytelling techniques were most effective? Why?**
- » **In what ways have you yourself used creativity to further your artistic development? To strengthen your self-concept?**
- » **What elders came to mind repeatedly as you reflected on these film excerpts? Were they acquaintances or famous figures?**
- » **How might this exploration of creativity in music help further your own relationships with elders?**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

Ithaca College maintains a digital archive of the Enduring Masters Series featuring musicians performing and reflecting on aging and their art.

For more information please visit the following website:
<http://www.ithaca.edu/enduringmasters>

Creativity in Music

Background Reading

Elders' Creativity in Music

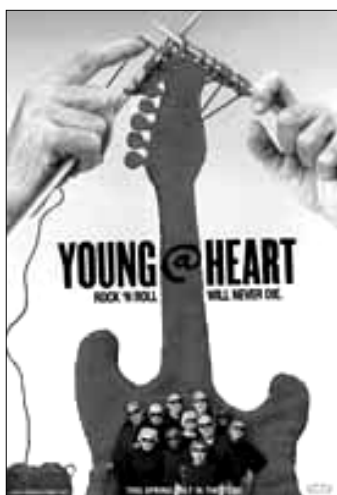
What tune have you written that you think is the best?

– Interviewer

Oh, the one coming up tomorrow. Always
– Duke Ellington
in A Masterpiece by Midnight

The structure of the screenplay, the use of significant visual metaphors, the contribution of sound and musical themes, the technical strengths of the art of the shot or the art of editing, and the power of actors to realize three-dimensional characters provide insights into the multiple levels of art that are brought to bear on depictions of the aging process. Films reveal the changes that occur gradually in the emotional and psychological development of aging individuals.

– Robert Yahnke
Heroes of Their Own Stories



What stereotypes has the poster artist used to examine creativity and aging?

Most of us have heard of particular famous elders who have continued to demonstrate a passion with music well into later life. Aretha Franklin and Bob Dylan both won Grammy awards for recordings made in their sixties. Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald composed, performed and recorded into their seventies. At the age of 89 Pete Seeger led a crowd of hundreds of thousands in song at “We Are One,” the inaugural concert for President Barack Obama. Cellist Pablo Casals performed at a high level well into his nineties. Conductor Leopold Stokowski signed a recording contract at the age of 94. And composer Elliott Carter celebrated his 100th birthday at a Carnegie Hall concert by premiering a piece for piano and orchestra that he had written at the age of 98.

It is important to note that a great many other musicians who are not so well known still continue to be creative well beyond their 60th birthday. The Senior Concert Orchestra of New York, made up of retirees from the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, and the NBC symphony, plays free concerts for colleges and high schools in addition to performing at esteemed venues such as Carnegie Hall.

The Young at Heart chorus from Northampton, Massachusetts, whose work is profiled in one of the films in this curriculum, includes both professional and amateur singers. Its members have ranged in age from their 70s to 100.

The average age within the Senior Singers' Chorale is 80. The group has 120 members from three senior centers in the Washington, D.C. area. They have performed at such diverse settings as the Gerontological Scientific Conference, the White House Conference on Aging and the Kennedy Center.

Community Arts Promote Longevity

In 2001 the Senior Singers' Chorale agreed to participate in a unique Creativity and Aging study jointly supported by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and George Washington University. The project's final report described it as "a multisite national study with the aim of measuring the impact of professionally conducted community based cultural programs on the general health, mental health, and social activities of older persons, age 65 and older" (NEA, 2006, p. 1). This was the first such study to use an experimental model with an intervention group (a community arts group like the Senior Singers' Chorale) and a control group to measure outcomes. The study sample included 300 participants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds with an average age of 80.

Initial interviews with members of the intervention and control groups determined that they were well matched with similar levels of functioning as determined by physical and mental health and level of activity. The final report concluded that those elders participating in weekly participatory arts programs within the intervention groups reported better physical health with fewer



What message does this CD cover give about creativity, aging and attitude?

doctors' visits and less medication usage, more positive responses on mental health questions and more engagement with overall activities. The conclusion of the executive summary offered these reflections on the potential of community arts programs to support creative independence among elders:

These results point to powerful positive intervention effects of these community-based art programs run by professional artists. They point to true health promotion and disease prevention effects. In that they also show stabilization and actual increase in community-based activities in general among those in the cultural programs, they reveal a positive impact on maintaining independence and on reducing dependency. (NEA, 2006, p.6)

In response to these findings the National Endowment of the Arts initiated a grant stream entitled *Creativity and Aging in America*. The 2008 NEA grants funded community arts projects in music and literature with people aged 65 and older in community settings such as senior centers, community centers, retirement centers, museums, literary centers, performing arts centers, libraries, schools, and healthcare facilities (NEA, 2008).

The NEA's executive summary of its 2005 Mini-Conference on Creativity and Aging in America offered this opening quotation from Liz Lerman, Artistic Director of Dance Exchange, a company which invites elders to keep dancing in community throughout their lives: "In assessing the critical needs of older adults, it's very important to understand that art, imagination, physical expression, and creativity are essential ingredients not only to healthy aging, but to a healthy society" (NEA, 2005, Executive Summary).

NAME _____

DATE _____

Title of Film Clip: _____

- 1) In what ways does the elder or elders demonstrate creativity?
- 2) How does the creative outlet seem to affect their ability to adapt to the challenges of aging?
- 3) What choices has the filmmaker made to heighten dramatic interest in the story? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, and soundtrack.)

Creativity in Preserving Cultural Tradition

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OVERVIEW



Video Clips

Creativity in Preserving Cultural Tradition

Objectives:

Students will:

- review perspectives on creativity as it applies to preserving cultural tradition
- reflect on their own beliefs about cultural tradition
- recognize the power of words, images and sound to influence a target audience
- analyze diverse storytelling techniques to convey messages

Vocabulary:

Otha Turner, cane flute, fife and drum, Arthur S. Alberts, Alan Lomax, polyrhythm, Okinawa, bonsai, Santa Clara pueblo, Tafoya family, kiva, Maori, Paikea

Media



Feel Like Going Home
(2:49)



Karate Kid
(2:59)



Legacy of Generations
(3:53)



Whale Rider
(2:22)

Materials Needed:

- Six page *Discussion Guide*
- Four video clips (access online or via Preserving Cultural Tradition digital media folder)
- *Student Reading* on Preserving Cultural Traditions (a copy for each student)
- *Student Handout* (a copy for each student)

Time

Approximately 50 minutes

Process:

The *Student Reading* should be given out beforehand for students to read prior to class (or during class). Introduction (background) material in the *Discussion Guide* can be summarized for the students prior to viewing the video clips, and students can complete the *Student Handouts* during or after each clip (individually or in pairs). The *Questions & Possible Answers* are designed to facilitate leading the decoding of the film clips, while *Further Questions* and *Summary Explorations* can be used to discuss the power of film to communicate messages, and to deepen the students' understanding of creativity in the context of preserving cultural traditions.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Video Clips

Theme: Preserving Cultural Tradition

Before Class: Review information in the *Overview* to the *Creativity and Aging* kit; make copies of the Student Reading (one per student) and Handout (number will vary depending on the process used – see below).

Student Reading: Assign to be read for that day's class (or have them read it in class before introducing the film clips); you may want to recap or discuss some of the main points prior to the film decoding and/or incorporate some of the information into the film discussion and further questions.

Presentation Introduction

This discussion uses the desire to preserve cultural traditions as a means to explore creativity in aging. It explores a variety of cultural traditions (fife and drum playing, bonsai tree pruning, pottery and oral history) from diverse geographic locations (Mississippi, West Africa, Okinawa, Santa Clara pueblo and New Zealand).

After you view each excerpt you will be answering some questions on a handout that ask you to reflect on the messages related to creativity and aging and on the filmmaking techniques used to convey these messages. In most cases the film excerpts that you will see are part of longer productions by different filmmakers. They are not meant to show the full story as told in the much longer works from which they are taken.

Student Handout: Students can complete the handouts individually or work together in pairs. There should be one handout for each film clip shown.

Film Clips: Read the brief introduction to each film excerpt and then play the clip; provide enough time for students to write out answers to the questions and then lead a discussion using the *Media Sample Questions & Answers* guide. Probe for a range of answers, asking students to give specific evidence from each clip to back up their answers (see *Tips for Decoding* in the Resources section of this kit). *Options:* lead discussion without having students complete handouts; show all four film clips with students writing responses, then lead discussion.



Feel Like Going Home

Film 1 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2003 documentary film *Feel Like Going Home* directed by Martin Scorsese as part of the PBS series, *The Blues*. Scorsese's film traces the roots of the blues from the Mississippi delta back to its homeland in West Africa. The two men on the porch at the beginning of the clip are musicians Otha Turner and Corey Harris.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What cultural traditions are represented and by whom are they preserved?

Possible Answers: The African fife and drum has been preserved by Otha Turner and his daughter, by generations of African drummers and fife players passing along the rhythms and by the archivists who recorded the music.

2) What creative ways have the elders used to preserve tradition?

Possible Answers: The elders during the days of slavery substituted other instruments for the banned drum. Their descendants have maintained African polyrhythms as an important means toward cultural survival in the face of centuries of oppression of people of African descent.

3) What creative choices has the filmmaker made in his storytelling?
(Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: He begins the story in Mississippi and then moves back to Africa with an image of Otha in his garden morphing into an African delta followed by archival stills of African musicians. The soundtrack of African fife and drum as played in both Mississippi and Africa accompanied with voice over explanation tie the two places together.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » How does the title of this segment, *Feel Like Going Home*, relate to the theme of preserving cultural traditions?
- » What risks did people take to preserve the tradition of African drumming and why would people elect to take such risks?
- » Describe an elder you have known who has chosen to pass along cultural traditions.



Karate Kid

Film 2 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1984 feature film *Karate Kid* directed by John Avildsen. It stars Ralph Macchio as Daniel and Pat Morita as Mr. Miyagi. In this scene Daniel comes to thank Mr. Miyagi for fixing his bicycle.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What cultural traditions are represented and by whom are they preserved?

Possible Answers: The Okinawan art of pruning bonsai trees has been sustained by Mr. Miyagi and his father who taught him the practice.

2) What creative ways has Mr. Miyagi used to preserve tradition?

Possible Answers: Rather than explaining “how to do it” he invites Daniel to practice pruning one of his trees with slight direction, using a closed eyes visioning technique to help Daniel relax and focus his mind on the task.

3) What creative choices have the filmmakers made in their storytelling?
(Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: The filmmakers use a sustained silence between the actors accompanied by a flute soundtrack and the sound of the scissors snipping as they prune to convey the meditative and peaceful advice that Mr. Miyagi has given with the instruction: “Trust. Concentrate. Think only tree. Make a perfect picture down to last pine needle. Wipe your mind clean. Everything but the tree.”

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » How does Mr. Miyagi put Daniel at ease?
- » What are the creative ways Mr. Miyagi uses to describe the origin of this cultural tradition?
- » Do you know elders who use their hands and mental discipline and concentration to preserve tradition?



Legacy of Generations

Film 3 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1998 PBS documentary *Legacy of Generations: Pottery by American Indian Women* directed by Linda Lewett. The section you will see focuses on four generations of the Tafoya family of Santa Clara Pueblo.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What cultural traditions are represented and by whom are they preserved?

Possible Answers: The Tafoya women preserve the tradition of Santa Clara pottery and tribal symbols.

2) What creative ways have the Tafoya women used to preserve tradition?

Possible Answers: Margaret describes how she talks to the clay to “make it stand up.” Luann describes how her mother taught her to use symbols within her pottery design to pass on tribal identity. She invites her granddaughter to sit with her as they work the clay side by side.

3) What creative choices has the filmmaker made in their storytelling?
(Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: She emphasizes the centrality of home and place by showing four generations of Tafoya women working and speaking in their homes and studios. Their stories of learning from their elders and the images of their pots show how their work is influenced by the previous generation while maintaining individual expression.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Discuss the tension between learning to reproduce the techniques and symbols of previous generations while cultivating personal creativity.
- » What cultural traditions have been passed down by the elders in your family and community, and how have they communicated their legacy of generations?
- » What does Margaret Tafoya mean when she says that she asks “my heavenly spirit to help me?”



Whale Rider

Film 4 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2003 feature film *Whale Rider*, directed by Niki Caro and starring Keisha Castle-Hughes as Paikea and Rawiri Paratene as her grandfather Koro (or Paka as she calls him). In this scene Paikea asks her grandfather about their Maori heritage and their common ancestor, Paikea, for whom she is named.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What cultural traditions are represented and by whom are they preserved?

Possible Answers: The tradition of passing along ancestral stories and lineage is preserved by the grandfather and by Paikea.

2) What creative ways has Koro used to preserve tradition?

Possible Answers: He improvises a metaphor, using the rope as a means to explain how the Maori “weave together the threads of Paikea so that our line remains strong.”

**3) What creative choices has the filmmaker made in her storytelling?
(Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)**

Possible Answers: The filmmaker uses this scene to demonstrate how cultural preservation is carried on generation to generation despite apparent breaks in the thread. By writing this scene she both gives the elder an opportunity to explain that “Each one of those threads is one of your ancestors, all joined together and strong” and to demonstrate how the next generation, represented by Paikea, is able to keep the rope strong as she mends the threads and makes the motor run.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What techniques in filming and soundtrack does the director use to underscore the symbolic importance of Paikea’s ability to repair the thread and start the motor?
- » What choices in scripting, location and props has the director made in order to highlight the ocean as a central foundation for Maori heritage and tradition?
- » Who are the elders who have passed along cultural heritage and family ancestral knowledge in your family or community?

SUMMARY EXPLORATIONS

- » **Reflect on the demonstrations of creativity you have seen. Which creative expressions do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **Consider the differences between the documentary films and the feature films. Which of the audio and visual storytelling techniques were most effective? Why?**
- » **What elders came to mind repeatedly as you reflected on these film excerpts? Were they acquaintances or famous figures?**
- » **How might this exploration of creativity in preserving cultural tradition help further your own relationships with elders?**
- » **Discuss the role that gender plays in how cultural traditions get preserved.**
- » **What media other than film can be a way to illustrate elders' creativity in cultural transmission and preservation?**
- » **What other films can you think of which portray elders using creativity to further the continuation of culture?**

Creativity in Preserving Cultural Traditions

Background Reading

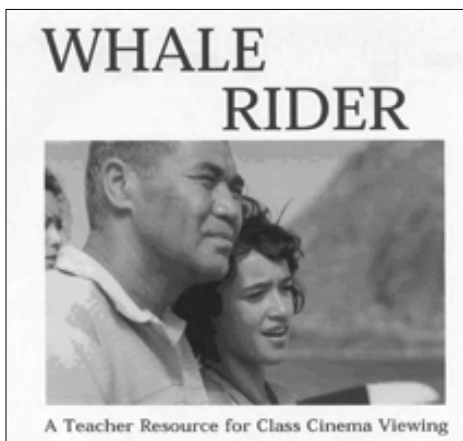
Elders as Creative Culture Keepers

Weave together the threads of Paikea so that our line remains strong. Each one of those threads is one of your ancestors...all joined together and strong all the way back to that whale of yours.

- Grandfather to Paikea
in *Whale Rider*

In most international films aging in place has a set of positive connotations. The old play a vital role in their communities. They are valued as "elders." They are repositories of stories, memories, rituals, and traditions. They know the old ways. They love the land, and they are committed to maintaining their connections to the land. Along the way they have struggled to maintain a sense of "community," drawn the young to them, functioned as mentors, and passed on their values to future generations.

- Robert Yahnke
Heroes of Their Own Stories



What messages about intergenerational engagement are communicated in this teacher guide cover?

The process of cultural preservation which occurs when elders pass along traditional knowledge to younger generations is a reciprocal one that benefits both older and younger participants. In *The Creative Age* and *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*, Gene Cohen argued that an elder's desire to pass along wisdom arises from a need to "sum up" one's own life experience in the third phase of life. In so doing elders initiate a highly creative process and become "keepers of the culture." He gave as an example *Washington Post* publisher Katherine Graham who won a Pulitzer Prize for her first book, the memoir, *Personal History*, which she wrote at age 79 (Cohen, 2005).

Elders' stories also serve an essential purpose in maintaining the integrity of family and culture. In the Iroquois tradition chiefs are required to consider the impact of their decisions on the seventh generation in the future. This awareness is carried forward through the tradition of oral history which assures that new generations will have "seventh generation consciousness" in their minds as they eventually take on the role of tribal elders.

In a 2008 article in the periodical *Monograph* entitled "Creativity Matters: Arts and Aging in America" authors Gay Hanna and Susan Perlstein suggested that:

Creativity strengthens morale in later life, enhances physical health, and enriches relationships. It also constitutes the greatest legacy people can leave to their children, grandchildren, and society as a whole since, historically, elders have functioned as keepers of the culture who pass on the history and values of a community to the next generation. (Hanna & Perlstein, 2008, p. 3)

Generational Collaboration to Preserve Cultural Tradition

Older adults have often found creative pathways to pass along cultural traditions. In many societies the spoken word has become the torch that passes light from one generation to the next. Throughout most of human history on the planet this cultural transmission took place at ritual events as families gathered together to strengthen security and community. In the 21st century this storytelling makes use of new media technology to carry traditional stories forward.

One example of this is RadioKids, a Hawaiian program which encourages young people to interview and record their elders using the traditional “talk story” means to pass along wisdom and culture. These recorded interviews are then offered as online radio programs and podcast archives which give young people the chance to learn media skills while participating in the traditional practice of cultural transmission.



What do the title and cover of this DVD tell you about how Native American pottery forms are preserved?

In a 2007 article in the online journal *Edutopia* author Katie Klinger concluded:

This transmittal of intergenerational Hawaiian wisdom will empower students with an awareness of their place as leaders and future custodians of sacred knowledge within the Hawaiian Islands. It will provide them with vital instructions from their elders to be caretakers of the oceans and natural resources -- for we must remember that if we lose the oceans, we lose the planet. And, most importantly, it will instill a sense of pride in these Hawaiian students that the *aloha* contained within community memories is not just a word; it is a spirit of life. (Klinger, 2007, para. 8)

Increasingly film has become a vehicle for transmitting cultural wealth. In 2003 Director Martin Scorsese was executive producer of *The Blues*, a series of seven films by world famous directors cataloguing the spread of blues music from Africa to Europe and North America. In 1990 Scorsese participated in another effort to preserve and document a precious cultural form when he joined in founding The Film Foundation, a not-for-profit organization devoted to preserving U.S. cinematic heritage. As president of The Film Foundation Scorsese said: "Film is history. With every foot of film lost, we lose a link to our culture, to the world around us, to each other, and to ourselves" (Scorsese, M. (n.d.). The Film Foundation Homepage).

The Foundation's goals are to create an understanding of the social and cultural significance of film and to help young people to better understand and interpret the language of film and visual images. These goals of the Film Foundation are parallel with the goals of this curriculum. Both are dedicated to questioning the role that creativity plays in the cinematic portrayal of elders as they work to preserve culture.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Title of Film Clip: _____

- 
- PROJECT
LOOK
SHARP

Creativity in Relationship

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OVERVIEW



Video Clips

Creativity in Relationship

Objectives:

Students will:

- review perspectives on creativity within relationship in aging
- reflect on their own beliefs about sustained relationships as one ages
- recognize the power of words, images and sound to influence a target audience
- analyze diverse storytelling techniques to convey messages

Vocabulary:

Oz, humbug, olfactory, Glaucous, tactile, Tasha Tudor

Media



Wizard of Oz
(3:57)



Surfing For Life
(3:15)



Harold and Maude
(3:38)



Take Joy
(3:46)

Materials Needed:

- Six page *Discussion Guide*
- Four video clips (access online or via Relationship digital media folder)
- *Student Reading* on Relationships (a copy for each student)
- *Student Handout* (a copy for each student)

Time

Approximately 50 minutes

Process:

The *Student Reading* should be given out beforehand for students to read prior to class (or during class). Introduction (background) material in the *Discussion Guide* can be summarized for the students prior to viewing the video clips, and students can complete the *Student Handouts* during or after each clip (individually or in pairs). The *Questions & Possible Answers* are designed to facilitate leading the decoding of the film clips, while *Further Questions* and *Summary Explorations* can be used to discuss the power of film to communicate messages, and to deepen the students' understanding of creativity in relationship.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Video Clips

Theme: Relationship

Before Class: Review information in the *Overview* to the *Creativity and Aging* kit; make copies of the Student Reading (one per student) and Handout (number will vary depending on the process used – see below).

Student Reading: Assign to be read for that day's class (or have them read it in class before introducing the film clips); you may want to recap or discuss some of the main points prior to the film decoding and/or incorporate some of the information into the film discussion and further questions.

Presentation Introduction

Creativity as seen through the lens of relationship takes many forms. These include an individual's connection to self, to another and to the broader community. The film excerpts and questions in this discussion provide an opportunity for inquiry into various challenges that elders experience and into some creative approaches to dealing with these challenges.

After you view each excerpt you will be answering some questions on a handout that ask you to reflect on the messages related to creativity and aging and on the filmmaking techniques used to convey these messages. In most cases the film excerpts that you will see are part of longer productions by different filmmakers. They are not meant to show the full story as told in the much longer works from which they are taken.

Student Handout: Students can complete the handouts individually or work together in pairs. There should be one handout for each film clip shown.

Film Clips: Read the brief introduction to each film excerpt and then play the clip; provide enough time for students to write out answers to the questions and then lead a discussion using the *Media Sample Questions & Answers* guide. Probe for a range of answers, asking students to give specific evidence from each clip to back up their answers (see *Tips for Decoding* in the Resources section of this kit). *Options:* lead discussion without having students complete handouts; show all four film clips with students writing responses, then lead discussion.



The Wizard of Oz

Film 1 Introduction



This excerpt is from the film *The Wizard of Oz* by Victor Fleming. This scene begins as Toto exposes the wizard in front of Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow following their return to the Emerald City with the wicked witch's broomstick.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are the challenges posed to the Wizard?

Possible Answers: He is challenged to defend his exposure as a “humbug” (fraud) and to affirm the capacities of the scarecrow, cowardly lion and tin man.

2) What creative ways has the Wizard found to deal with these challenges?

Possible Answers: He admits that he is a humbug, though “a very good man.” He offers words of affirmation for each character and bestows totems of recognition in the form of a diploma, a medal and a testimonial heart.

3) What are some of the creative storytelling techniques used by the filmmaker to illustrate these points?

Possible Answers: The visual and sound effects of thunder and lightning continue even after the Wizard has been exposed accentuating the tension between imagination and reality. The primary musical theme plays as he awards the Cowardly Lion the bravery medal marking the resolution after the long journey.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » The Wizard of Oz is played by an actor, Frank Morgan, who assumes several other roles in the film, including that of Captain Marvel in Kansas and the Gatekeeper of the Emerald City. Discuss how the ability to handle multiple roles in life can support one's creativity.
- » Describe an elder you have known who is able to affirm the gifts of others.
- » Why do you think this film has become such a classic?



Surfing For Life

Film 2 Introduction



This excerpt is from the film, *Surfing For Life* by David Brown and Roy Earnest. The film profiles ten surfers who have continued to surf into their seventies, eighties and nineties. In this segment you will see Fred Van Dyke, Rabbit Kekai and Shay Bintliff.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are the challenges posed to the elders?

Possible Answers: Fred – fear, not meeting expectations of self and others, anger at mortality;
Rabbit – stress, feeling down; Shay – the reality of change, degraded vision.

2) What creative ways have the elders found to deal with these challenges?

Possible Answers: Fred – choosing to no longer ride big waves, maintaining a positive attitude, nurturing a loving relationship with his partner, using surfing as a means to stay in shape; Rabbit – accepting his wife's encouragement and going surfing; Shay – using humor, changing her attitude, surfing.

3) What are some of the creative storytelling techniques used by the filmmakers to illustrate these points?

Possible Answers: Fred – juxtaposing images of him surfing big waves as a young man with emotional disclosure as an elder; Rabbit – using jubilant Hawaiian music as soundtrack for his joyful surfing; Shay – cutting from her smiling during interview to her smiling on the surfboard.

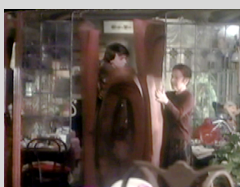
FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Why might the filmmakers have chosen to use surfing as the organizing theme for this film about approaches to aging? What other organizing themes might work as well?
- » How would this section have changed if Shay's partner, Barb, had also been included (as was true for Fred and Rabbit)? Why might she have been left out?
- » Describe an elder you have known who has chosen to use a favorite sport or activity as a means to creative expression.



Harold and Maude

Film 3 Introduction



This excerpt is from the film *Harold and Maude* by Hal Ashby. The film follows the relationship between Harold, a young man in his twenties struggling with suicidal impulses, and Maude, about to turn 80, living alone in a remodeled railroad car. In this scene Harold comes to visit Maude at her railroad car home shortly after meeting her.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are the challenges posed to Maude?

Possible Answers: To win Harold's approval; to express the beauty and complexity she perceives in the world; to engage as many senses as possible in her artwork.

2) What creative ways has Maude found to deal with these challenges?

Possible Answers: She shows Harold her artwork and keeps asking "Do you like it?" She uses painting, sculpture and "odorifics" to express herself.

3) What are some of the storytelling techniques used by the filmmaker to illustrate his characters and their relationship?

Possible Answers: The scene begins with Maude posing for Glaucous and then asking Harold if he approves, setting up the subsequent flirting and sensual tension. The set designer fills the space in Maude's home with many props – a piano, a Buddha statue, houseplants – to accentuate the eccentricity and complexity of Maude's character.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What were your reactions to Maude's flirtation with Harold?
- » Are there risks in basing a film on a relationship between two characters so divergent in age? If so, would these risks be different if the elder were male? Why?
- » Describe an elder you have known who has chosen to enter close new relationships.



Take Joy: The Magical World of Tasha Tudor

Film 4 Introduction



This excerpt is from the film, *Take Joy: The Magical World of Tasha Tudor* by Sarah Kerriush. The film profiles the famous children's book author and illustrator.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are the challenges posed to Tasha Tudor?

Possible Answers: She is challenged by the predators that eat her flowers, by life being "so short."

2) What creative ways has Tasha Tudor found to deal with these challenges?

Possible Answers: She devotes herself to gardening, drinks goats' milk and cultivates the attitude of "taking joy." She sees herself as part of the universe and nature and strives to advance toward her dreams in the direction she has imagined.

3) What are some of the storytelling techniques used by the filmmaker to illustrate these points?

Possible Answers: Showing Tasha at work in her garden with the soundtrack "Tis a Gift to Be Simple," accentuating Tasha's theme of clear and simple living. Interspersing Tasha's commentary with an occasional lyrical voiceover suggesting "If fairies do exist, you can be sure they would live here."

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Tasha Tudor is renowned as an illustrator of children's books. Why do you suppose the filmmaker might have chosen to focus this segment on her work in a garden?
- » Discuss the place of imagination within creativity.
- » Discuss how nature is connected to creativity.
- » Describe an elder you have known who has taken joy over a lifetime.

SUMMARY EXPLORATIONS

- » **Reflect on the challenges you have seen. Which challenges do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **Are there challenges you have just seen that you have difficulty understanding? If so, which one(s) and why?**
- » **Reflect on the creative choices you have seen. Which choices do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **Are there choices you have just seen that you have difficulty understanding? If so, which one(s) and why?**
- » **Which of the audio and visual storytelling techniques were most effective? Why?**
- » **In what ways have you yourself used creativity to further self-awareness? To deepen interpersonal relationship? To develop relationship to community and the wider world?**
- » **What elders came to mind as you reflected on these film excerpts? Were they acquaintances or famous figures?**
- » **How might this exploration of creativity in relationship help further your own relationships with elders?**

Creativity in Relationship

Background Reading

Elders in Relationship

Now I have a positive attitude toward (aging). As hard as I train, as hard as I dive, as hard as I play, I am slowing down. All I can do is enjoy it, if I'm getting old I got to dig it.

- Fred Van Dyke
in *Surfing For Life*

Film is a visual medium, and some of the most significant images of aging in international films occur at the ends of the films when the intergenerational relationships are summed up through key visual metaphors that signify the bonds that have been created and/or strengthened through the action of the film. In every case elders are portrayed as having achieved a sense of harmony and serenity in light of those relationships.

- Robert Yahnke
Heroes of Their Own Stories



What message does this film poster convey about creativity, aging and relationship?

There are many lenses through which to look at aging and relationship. We can explore intergenerational relationships such as those between an elder mentor and a younger apprentice or between a grandparent and a grandchild. We can look at intra-generational relationships such as those between elder partners, friends or siblings. And we can consider inner relationships, those that bring awareness to an elder's personal reflections on himself or herself as a person getting older within the normal human aging process.

Researchers have conducted a number of studies seeking to measure the impact of social relationships on the process of aging. Ken Dychtwald reviewed this research in his book *Healthy Aging*. In his section on "Continuing Engagement With Life: Social Relations" he summed up the results of 17 studies into the effects of social relationships on successful aging. He concluded that lack of social ties is a health risk factor and that, conversely, emotional and material social support can have positive health effects (cited in Rowe & Kahn, 1999, p. 37).

Gene Cohen concurred with these conclusions in his book, *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*. Dr. Cohen concluded that maintaining social relationships can have a profoundly positive impact on the physical health of older people. He cited the positive benefits of social engagement in combating loneliness and reducing blood pressure and stress (Cohen, 2005).

Elders' Relationship to the Aging Self

Research findings also suggest that a positive attitude toward aging may produce health benefits. In 1975 Becca Levy of the Yale School of Public Health began a long-term study of 660 residents of Oxford, Ohio. She asked them to complete a survey about their attitudes toward aging and then correlated their answers with the ages at which they died.

Her findings were striking: "We found that individuals with a more positive view of aging tended to live seven-and-a-half years longer than those with more negative views of aging. This advantage remained after adjusting for a number of factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, loneliness and functional health" (cited in Bucks, 2009, para.2). Levy's finding that people's attitude towards aging was a better predictor of longevity than just about any other measured factor gives a measure of credibility to the old adage "you are as old as you feel."

Research studies can reveal a great deal. So too can "grandmother wisdom" about aging and attitude as offered by four women whom you will see in the film clips.



What message does this DVD cover give about creativity, aging and attitude?

Judy Garland played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*: "I think there's something peculiar about me that I haven't died. It doesn't make sense but I refuse to die" (Garland, n.d.).

Dr. Shay Bintliff is the physician surfer in *Surfing For Life*: "Old age is like a bank account...you withdraw from what you've deposited. I learned to deposit many healthy habits, giving to others, and memories from an abundant life well lived" (Bintliff, n.d., para 4).

Actress Ruth Gordon commented on playing Maude in *Harold and Maude*: "It's a terrific part, she's fantastic, big acting scenes, deep and moving, then funny, and I sing a song and dance. Talk about vitality, it leaps off the page, and she's eighty! Who could play it but me?" (Gordon, 1986, p. 381).

Tasha Tudor, children's book author and gardener, was profiled in the film *Take Joy*: "It's wonderful to grow old. You can get away with murder. Everyone takes great care of you. And they're afraid of offending you. You can say the most outrageous things and get away with it. I fully believe old age is one of the most delightful periods of my life" (Frog and Toad, 2008, para 8).

Dr. Cohen gets the last word on this topic in his summary chapter on "Cultivating Social Intelligence:"

Social intelligence, memory, and wisdom are closely related fruits that age alone can ripen. The aging brain has greater potential than most people think, and development never stops. Our capacity for social involvement and interpersonal relations remains as strong as ever in later years and is a vital wellspring of both physical and mental health. (Cohen, 2005, p. 134)

NAME _____

DATE _____

Title of Film Clip: _____

- 1) What are the challenges posed to the elders?
- 2) What creative ways have the elders found to deal with these challenges?
- 3) What are some of the creative storytelling techniques used by the filmmaker to illustrate these points?

Creativity in Service

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OVERVIEW



Video Clips

Creativity in Service

Objectives:

Students will:

- review perspectives on creativity and service to community
- reflect on their own beliefs about service and aging
- recognize the power of words, images and sound to influence a target audience
- analyze diverse storytelling techniques to convey messages

Vocabulary:

Pete Seeger, School of the Americas (SOA), Ruth Ellis, Black History/Herstory Month, Kwanzaa, Woody Brown, Hale Makua Health Center, Mohandas Gandhi, Nehru, partition

Media



Pete Seeger
(3:46)



Living with Pride
(3:43)



Of Wind and Waves
(3:09)



Gandhi
(4:17)

Materials Needed:

- Six page *Discussion Guide*
- Four video clips (access online or via Service digital media folder)
- *Student Reading* on Mentoring (a copy for each student)
- *Student Handout* (a copy for each student)

Time

Approximately 50 minutes

Process:

The *Student Reading* should be given out beforehand for students to read prior to class (or during class). Introduction (background) material in the *Discussion Guide* can be summarized for the students prior to viewing the video clips, and students can complete the *Student Handouts* during or after each clip (individually or in pairs). The *Questions & Possible Answers* are designed to facilitate leading the decoding of the film clips, while *Further Questions* and *Summary Explorations* can be used to discuss the power of film to communicate messages, and to deepen the students' understanding of creativity in the context of service by elders.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Video Clips

Theme: Service

Before Class: Review information in the *Overview* to the *Creativity and Aging* kit; make copies of the Student Reading (one per student) and Handout (number will vary depending on the process used – see below).

Student Reading: Assign to be read for that day's class (or have them read it in class before introducing the film clips); you may want to recap or discuss some of the main points prior to the film decoding and/or incorporate some of the information into the film discussion and further questions.

Presentation Introduction

This discussion uses the practice of service to community as a means to explore creativity in aging. It explores various forms of service to local, national and international communities. The elders in service are both world-renowned figures, like former Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi and Pete Seeger as well as less well-known people like Ruth Ellis and Woody Brown.

After you view each excerpt you will be answering some questions on a handout that ask you to reflect on the messages related to creativity and aging and on the filmmaking techniques used to convey these messages. In most cases the film excerpts that you will see are part of longer productions by different filmmakers. They are not meant to show the full story as told in the much longer works from which they are taken.

Student Handout: Students can complete the handouts individually or work together in pairs. There should be one handout for each film clip shown.

Film Clips: Read the brief introduction to each film excerpt and then play the clip; provide enough time for students to write out answers to the questions and then lead a discussion using the *Media Sample Questions & Answers* guide. Probe for a range of answers, asking students to give specific evidence from each clip to back up their answers (see *Tips for Decoding* in the Resources section of this kit). *Options:* lead discussion without having students complete handouts; show all four film clips with students writing responses, then lead discussion.



Pete Seeger: The Power of Song

Film 1 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2007 documentary film *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song* by Jim Brown. In explaining why he chose Seeger as a subject the director said: “He got a whole generation interested in playing guitar and banjo, got them singing together, and helped introduce America to its own folk heritage, while using music as an instrument for social change” (Brown, n.d., Director Statement). This segment appears at the end of the film.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are some obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced in this clip?

Possible Answers: Seeger teaches music to elementary school students, joins peace rallies and picks up litter.

2) What are some creative and less obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?

Possible Answers: Bruce Springsteen references Seeger’s belief that songs can change the world. This narrative is accompanied by scenes of Seeger playing music with others in community settings suggesting that collective music-making is itself an act of service to others.

3) How did the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: He illustrates Seeger’s song, “To My Old Brown Earth” by selecting images of spring flowers, clouds overhead and Pete in community settings as the lyrics exhort: “I’ll give these last few molecules of I...Guard well our human chain.”

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What values are implied and what values are overt in this film?
- » Why might the filmmaker have chosen the song “To My Old Brown Earth” as a lead soundtrack for this film?
- » What is Seeger’s perspective on what it will take for people to survive?



***Living with Pride:
Ruth Ellis @ 100***

Film 2 Introduction



This excerpt is from the film, *Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100* by Yvonne Welbon. The film profiles a woman whom the filmmaker describes as “the oldest ‘out’ African American lesbian” providing “a rare opportunity to experience a century of our history as lived by one inspiring woman” (*Living With Pride*, 1999, Back Cover).

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are some obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced in this clip?

Possible Answers: Ruth running errands for other elders, buying groceries and carrying them back to her building.

2) What are some creative and less obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?

Possible Answers: Ruth serves as a role model for her younger community as evidenced by her being honored with an honorary degree. She also becomes a stand-in elder for those without personal family members in that role allowing her to provide reciprocal engagement with younger community members.

3) How did the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: Uses visual props (diploma and snapshots) and footage (graduation ceremony and birthday party) to illustrate various stories; intersperses interviews with Ruth with those of younger community members.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Discuss the reciprocity in relationship between Ruth and her younger community. What benefits does each derive from the relationship?
- » What particular efforts have the younger people in Ruth’s life made to support her as she ages?
- » What elders do you know who practice service to community?



Of Wind and Waves

Film 3 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 2007 documentary film *Of Wind and Waves* by David L. Brown. The film focuses on the life of Woody Brown, pioneer in Hawaiian catamaran sailing and big-wave surfing. According to the director: “Woody is like a modern Thoreau on a surfboard, living in harmony with the world around him, alive to the possibilities of each new day, and following his own singular vision of how to be in the world” (Brown, 2007, Press Information). This section begins with a meeting between Woody Brown and his daughter.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are some obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced in this clip?

Possible Answers: Woody Brown’s volunteering at the adult day health center and authoring a book, *The Gospel of Love*.

2) What are some creative and less obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?

Possible Answers: Brown’s theory of sharing love, joy and forgiveness is itself offered as a form of service to others. The head nurse explains how beneficial and inspiring this attitude toward life is to the other elders with whom he volunteers.

3) How did the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: The clip begins and ends with images of the ocean – a beautiful sunset and Woody Brown surfing in his nineties, both visual underscoring of the title theme – *Of Wind and Waves*.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » What has inspired Woody Brown to write his books?
- » Do joy and love relate to creativity and aging? If so, how?
- » What background music did the director choose for this segment and why?



Gandhi

Film 4 Introduction



This excerpt is from the 1982 feature film, *Gandhi*, directed by David Attenborough and starring Ben Kingsley. The film won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor. This scene appears near the end of the film as Gandhi fasts after rioting has broken out across the country following the partition of India and Pakistan.

Media Sample Questions & Answers

1) What are some obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced in this clip?

2) What are some creative and less obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?

3) How did the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, & soundtrack.)

Possible Answers: Gandhi's assertion that "I know a way out of hell" as he instructs a Hindu man to adopt and raise a child as a Muslim.

Possible Answers: Gandhi's decision to stake his life on the Indian people's willingness and ability to end violence was an act of great service to and faith in his country.

Possible Answers: The filmmaker uses the darkness of night to accentuate the nearness of hopelessness and death. He stages the Hindu man's entrance in a way designed to maximize tension by having him unexpectedly break through the first group as Gandhi's supporters react with shock and anxiety.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- » Can you think of other world leaders who have used creative nonviolence as a means to solve national or international problems?
- » Gandhi had faith in the practice of nonviolence and he employed discipline in search of what he called his "experiments with truth." How do faith and discipline impact creativity?
- » What made this film worthy of the Best Picture Academy Award?

SUMMARY EXPLORATIONS

- » **Reflect on the demonstrations of creativity you have seen. Which creative expressions do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **Reflect on the acts of service you have seen. Which forms of service do you most relate to? Why?**
- » **Which of the audio and visual storytelling techniques were most effective? Why?**
- » **In what ways have you yourself used creativity in service to community?**
- » **What elders came to mind repeatedly as you reflected on these film excerpts? Were they acquaintances or famous figures?**

Creativity in Service

Background Reading

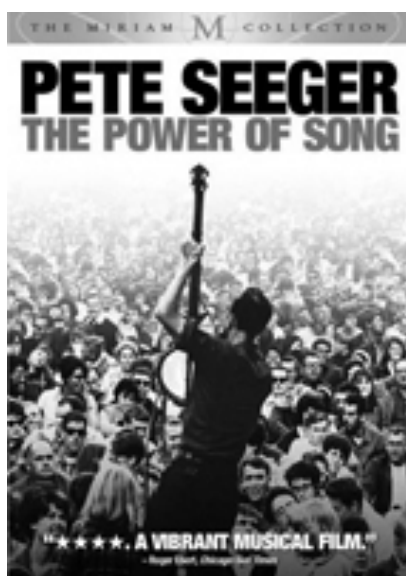
Elders in Service to Community

*When we're young we just take all the time
and I figure now it's time to give a little bit.*

- Woody Brown on his work at
at Hale Makua Health Center
in *Of Wind and Waves*

*In many international films old people
participate in community, foster community—
and even in some respects create community.
Elders in these films complete their life's work
in the context of community, and thus they
either transform others or are themselves
transformed through that process.*

- Robert Yahnke
Heroes of Their Own Stories



What messages does this DVD cover
communicate about film and song as media
to promote service to community?

In the 21st century familiar stereotypes of older people kicking back in retirement and leisure have been replaced with more realistic perceptions that place elders at the center of community involvement. Whether labeled civic engagement, volunteerism or community service, the reality is that people in their sixties and beyond continue to give back to their communities in large numbers.

Many recent studies confirm this trend. In 2003 the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) issued a "Working in Retirement" report showing that 57% of working people between 50 and 70 expected to participate in volunteer or charity work upon their retirement from the workforce (Brown, 2003). A 2008 study of nearly 700 retirees published in *The Gerontologist* indicated that 18% worked for more than five hours per week as volunteers in their communities. These numbers are large enough for researchers to justify the inclusion of "civic engagement" as a distinct role for life in retirement (Kaskie et al., 2008).

Gene Cohen is among the foremost researchers in the area of creativity and aging. In his book *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain* he suggested that:

The impulse to give back becomes especially acute in later life as people's perspectives about their own mortality shift and their values change as a result of confronting the challenges of aging...participants in my study who found meaningful volunteer experiences and other ways to "give back" were those most satisfied with their retirement. (Cohen, 2005, p. 151)

Extending Opportunities for Elder Service

Cohen's findings were echoed in the work of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. He interviewed people in their seventies who had been highly creative in their youth. He found that "often their interest had broadened to include larger issues; politics, human welfare, the environment, and occasionally transcendental concerns with the future of the universe" (cited in Vaillant, 2002, p. 240).

One consequence of these studies has been an increased awareness of the need to extend opportunities for older citizens to participate in civic life. The 2005 White House Conference on Aging concluded with resolutions calling for the reauthorization of the National and Community Service Act to expand meaningful volunteer opportunities for the nation's aging population (Rozario, 2007). In 2006 the Older Americans Act was reauthorized providing new authority to the Administration on Aging to initiate programs that support the civic engagement of older citizens.

Civic organizations have mirrored this policy direction. In the first decade of the new century the Gerontological Society of America, the National Council on Aging, and the

American Society on Aging all named civic engagement as a program priority for their agencies.

Elders seeking to help others through service to community include world famous models of selfless contribution such as Mother Theresa, the Dalai Lama and Mohandas Gandhi who famously said "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Less well known is his reflection on the spirit of giving: "Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy" (Gandhi, Haribhai & Bok, 1993, p. 175).

Gandhi's devotion to community service inspired the group South Asian Americans Leading Together to establish a National Gandhi Day of Service. In 2008 this program sponsored "Be the Change" events in over 60 cities and campuses across the United States (Punnoose, 2008).

Most civic engagement by elders happens in quiet and constant ways every day across the country and around the world. An example of this humble daily practice is the volunteer service offered by Woody Brown, inventor of the modern ocean catamaran. In his nineties Woody decided to offer his volunteer time near his home on Maui to the adult day care center, Hale Makua, which means Home of Respected Elders.

The guiding principles of Hale Makua define it as a village demonstrating compassion, involvement and diversity as antidotes to loneliness, helplessness and boredom. "Serving Community" is one of Hale Makua's core values (Hale Makua, 2009). For several years before his own passing at Hale Makua Woody would bicycle there several times a week for six-hour volunteer work sessions during which he would visit with and care for others. It is this type of creative and generous spirit that keeps elders alive and engaged for as long as they are able in the effort to offer back to their communities.



What message does this poster give about aging and service?

NAME _____

DATE _____

Title of Film Clip: _____

- 1) What are some obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?
- 2) What are some creative and less obvious examples of service portrayed or referenced?
- 3) How did the filmmaker demonstrate creativity? (Consider techniques in filming, scripting, and soundtrack.)

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ITHACA



The Enduring Masters Series at Ithaca College

<http://www.ithaca.edu/enduringmasters>

Ithaca College has been pleased to present the Enduring Masters - a concert series featuring musicians performing and reflecting on aging and their art. The Enduring Masters Series was a partnership of the Ithaca College School of Music and the Gerontology Institute's Linden Center for Creativity and Aging (a member of the Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies).



After a very successful project presenting world-renowned musicians to Ithaca College and its environs and supporting performances of local musicians and Ithaca College students in venues serving older adults living in Tompkins County, the funding for the Enduring Masters through the NY Music Fund has ended.

However, work on the digital archive of Enduring Masters performances continues and the college will be incorporating the Enduring Masters theme under the auspices of the Linden Center for Creativity and Aging (www.ithaca.edu/lindencenter).



Through the New York Music Fund, the Enduring Masters Series has hosted some of the most prominent performers, composers and educators in music; including the following:

Featured Artists:

Marian McPartland
Billy Taylor
François Rabbath
Karel Husa
Joan Tower
George Tsontakis
Daniel Binelli
Steve Brown
Chico Hamilton
William Bolcom
Joan Morris
Elliott Schwartz
Sydney Hodkinson
The Verdehr Trio
Dick Hyman



Please visit the website for more information and resources regarding this program:

<http://www.ithaca.edu/enduringmasters>

TIPS FOR DECODING MEDIA DOCUMENTS

Finding Media Documents

The term “document” refers to any media example, including printed text, images, audio and audiovisual clips, comic strips, etc.

1. **Start with a “rich” media document** that is appropriate for your students and relates to your goals.
 - Identify both your curriculum goals and your media literacy goals
 - Get support in finding appropriate documents from your librarian or other information specialists
 - Think through how you will know if your goals have been reached through the decoding lesson (how will students demonstrate what they have learned?)
2. Decode **different forms and types of media**.
 - Consider excerpts from books, TV, film, websites, maps, posters, songs, video games, advertisements, paintings, magazines, newspapers, blogs, radio, comics and editorial cartoons, etc.
 - Consider both contemporary and historic, high and low tech, mainstream and alternative, institutional and personal
 - Consider different media genre such as documentary and dramatic film; TV news, news analysis, docu-drama and reality TV; hip-hop, country, folk and classical music etc.
3. Address **copyright issues** appropriately.
 - Do you have copyright permission or can you apply fair-use (e.g. by critiquing the document with your students)?
4. **Prepare background information and probe questions** for teaching about content and source.
 - Identify and construct the background information students will need in order to effectively decode the documents
 - Plan evidence-based questions that ask students to apply core content and reflect on media construction and sourcing
5. **Less is more.** It’s better to do a “deep reading” of a few documents than a superficial analysis of many.
 - Show short excerpts from videos or films rather than the entire thing, if at all possible (a few minutes of video content is very rich in audio and visual information)

Leading A Decoding

The key to decoding media documents lies in the use of **questions**. Try to shoot for 80-90% of what you say being in the form of questions.

1. Set up the decoding by **giving the context for analysis**.
 - Provide the necessary background information before you start the decoding
 - Typically give students a “heads-up” of what to look for
2. Always **start the decoding with a question**.

What are your impressions from what you see (just saw, just heard)?
 Does anyone have a response? Who wants to comment first?

If possible, use a specific question that relates back to your curriculum goal:

What is the message about ____? Which person do you think is DeSoto? What important event does this represent?

Or you can begin with first set of media literacy questions:

Who do you think made this (produced this)? What was their purpose?
 Who’s the target audience?
3. Follow immediately with **evidence probes**. You may want to clarify whether you’re looking for general evidence (including from the person’s prior experience), or specific evidence seen/heard in the document.

What’s your evidence for that? What makes you say that?
 What’s your evidence in the document? Where do you see that?

4. **Continue to probe** when appropriate, especially to get at key content points and perspectives.

Expansion: Tell me more about that. What do you mean by ___?

Interpretations: What words might you use to describe him? How does this make you feel?

Clarifications: So you're saying ___? Do you mean ___?

Restatements: (restate in slightly different words or while pointing to the relevant element of the image)

Affirmations: Yes! Interesting. No one's ever said that before!

5. **Open the discussion up** to other participants:

Anyone else? What else? Does anyone else have a different interpretation?

I'm going to go around and have each of you say one word that describes ___.

Call on people by name, if possible:

Carol, what do you think?

6. Use **physical cues**.

- Get close to the audience and use arm gestures to draw them in
- Point to people to answer.
- Use positive affect, nonjudgmental responses as much as possible (laugh, make facial expressions, etc.)

7. **Cautions:**

a) Don't tell them what to see, or what the answer is, if possible. Continue to use questions to draw them to the points you want to make, or to the right answer if there is one.

b) Help students to analyze and evaluate free from your judgments:

- Craft questions that do not bias student judgment (e.g., "What are the messages about Native Americans?" not "How is this depiction racist?")
- Recognize how your own biases may show up in your body language, facial expressions, language, and framing when leading a decoding
- Decode documents that you approve of (e.g., student-produced videos critiquing media) as well as documents you are critical of (e.g., manipulative advertising or political messages by someone you would not vote for)
- Recognize the power behind your choice of documents to decode

c) Don't set them up to feel stupid or set traps to trick them. Or if you do, use "we" language:

We've learned to focus on ___ and we tend not to notice ___. Why wouldn't we have thought of that?

Or acknowledge your own tendencies:

That's what I would have said too. When I first thought this, that's what I thought.

d) Listen for resistance (e.g., when a student dismisses a comment by saying "you are reading into this") or for one-sided comments that are stated as truth, and probe accordingly:

Is there only one viewpoint on that? How might other people respond differently?

e) "Do no harm" - be aware of the power of media messages and the potential for unintended consequences (e.g., reinforcing the stereotypes or potentially harmful messages we are decoding)

- Contrast negative or potentially harmful messages with positive media representations (decoding both)
- Cue into and follow-up with student's emotional responses to documents
- Listen well to the meaning making of your students

Following the Decoding

1. Assess how well the decoding experience worked to meet your goals.

- Note how the students responded to different documents and questions
- Note whether the activity engaged students who are not typically engaged in learning as well as those who typically are

2. Adapt the lesson as needed

- Eliminate "great" documents that don't work
- Learn from your mistakes and successes