

Designing Intergenerational Exchange

**Some Ideas, Teaching Tips &
Frequently Asked Questions**

Some Ideas

- **Icebreakers**
- **Inviting a speaker**
- **Small group discussions**
- **Interviewing older adults**
- **Intergenerational book readings**
- **Collaborative art projects**
- **Student presentations**
- **Team projects**

from AGHE Teaching Brief: Using Intergenerational Exchange in the Classroom to Advance Age Inclusivity

Some Tips

- Organize coordinator, lines of communication, opportunities for instructor exchange
- Consider incentives and project support
- Prepare for advanced planning (“calls”, scheduling, recruitment and enrollment)
- Arrange welcome notes, student preparation, technology support
- Make use of introductions, interactions, and recaps
- Develop assessment plans
- Enjoy and appreciate!



Some Questions

Course Design

- What courses lend themselves to intergenerational instruction?

Classroom Dynamics

- To what extent should older adults' "age-related background" be acknowledged and leveraged in the classroom during discussions about age- or history-related issues?
- To what extent is it acceptable to "teach from behind" in managing age-related interactions (e.g., pre-arrange groups so that they reflect a mixture of students of different ages and experiences)?
- A common "complaint" by younger students is that some older students dominate class discussions – while some older students express discomfort about "over-talking" and then hold back -- how can these dynamics be managed?

Some Questions

Ageism

- Subtle “ageism” may emerge in intergenerational classes (e.g., younger students acting in a patronizing manner, older students pointing out the problems of younger generations). How can it be addressed?

Individual Differences

- Older adults may have different learning expectations, motivations, and background experience. How can we balance or offset learner differences?

A Lesson Learned

“An underlying concept when designing courses for adults who vary in age, cognitive, and physical levels is to consider a variety of choices in the way information is acquired, demonstrated, and assessed. Choices built into courses give students of all ages agency and diminish the isolating effects of having to create ad hoc concessions to age-related learner variability.”

Hortense Gerado, Professor of Anthropology and Theater Arts, Lasell University





Let's Brainstorm.

- What course do you teach?
- How could you make your course an intergenerational experience? What intergenerational activities could you do?
- What would you need to do to set up things up?
- What could *go wrong*?
- What does *going right* mean to you?
- What will get you to do it?