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Visual Art Learning Preferences of Older Adults

by

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Thesis

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Visual Art Learning Preferences of Older Adults

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Dedication

To my husband, family, and friends, whose encouragement and support allowed me to complete this project. Special thanks go to my late grandfather, Joseph “Froggy” Jammaer, who always told me the “tassel is worth the hassle.”

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Abstract

Visual Art Learning Preferences of Older Adults

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This study sought to determine visual art learning preferences of older adult participants of museum and senior recreation center programs. Through a series of interviews and questionnaires administered to older adults, I sought to identify preferred learning formats, art media, areas of study, and popular learning goals so that local education institutions can plan effective programs to serve the older adult population. It was determined that subjects preferred the learning topics of history, places and cultures, fitness and health, religion and spirituality, and nature. The most popular art media were painting, photography, crafts, drawing, and textile arts. Preferred learning formats were field trips, hands-on activities, individual projects, short series, and lectures. The most popular learning goals were determined to be spending quality time with a loved one, personal growth, making new friends, enjoyment, and social connection. The conclusion offers program development strategies to art educators.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This study centers on a survey administered to find out the learning preferences of older adult participants in recreational and art education programs in the Austin area. Through a series of interviews and questionnaires administered to older adults, I sought to learn the visual art education preferences of older adults, and illuminate what varieties of visual art programs would be most enjoyed by Austin's older adult community. The purpose of this study was to define the visual art education preferences of older adults in order to offer local education institutions program suggestions that will help these institutions better serve the older adult population. This study is best characterized as an initial investigation undertaken to test the waters of art education needs in Austin and provide generalizations on learning preferences. It is a way to begin to identify learning formats, preferred art media, preferred areas of study, and popular learning goals held by older adults in order to provide a starting point for local educators who may wish to initiate or expand programming for older adults.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the visual art learning preferences of older adult participants in leisure learning programs at Austin museums and senior recreation centers?

JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

Austin art institutions are deficient in their programming for adults age 65 and over. Currently, no Austin art institution offers programs designed specifically for older adults. In contrast, local art institutions offer an abundance of programs designed for children and general adults. This disparity likely stems from a combination of obstacles, including constricted budgets, lack of precedence, ageism, inexperienced staff and the

relatively young average age of the Austin population. Be that as it may, Austin like the rest of the country, is aging and art organizations will be better served through responding to these changing demographics. The older adult population is an important part of the Austin community, therefore art institutions should take into account this group of citizens. The state of Texas' initiative on Aging, *Aging Texas Well*, was created to "ensure that seniors have opportunities to participate in and contribute to, meaningful activities within the widest possible range of education and training, and civic, cultural, and recreational activities" (Walker, Bisbee, Porter, & Flanders, 2004, p. 354). Older adults have been previously underserved by area art institutions, and investigating the problem is the first step toward correcting it.

MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND SIGNIFICANCE TO ART EDUCATION

My motivations for conducting this research are as personal as they are professional. I have a very close relationship with my grandparents, who have always inspired me to live well and always continue to learn. When I was little, my mother's parents visited us at our house every day. My grandpa would tease me about my goofy pajamas and my grandmother would delightfully fuss over me. She would tell me stories about growing up in England with her ten brothers and sisters. He would tell me jokes and riddles. To this day, my grandmother has nothing but good news and smiles for me. Even when she and my grandfather fall on hard times, she always talks about things in such a way that makes it seem like everything will be okay. As I grow older though, I am increasingly more aware of what she is really saying when she sugarcoats the challenges that she and my grandfather face as a result of their age. I care very much for my grandparents because they care so much for me. I want them to be able to get the most out of life, and continue to grow and challenge themselves as they have always encouraged me to do.

Undoubtedly, they are enjoying this time of their life and the freedom it affords, but at the same time there are new obstacles they must face. Simple things like going to the store and driving to a friends' house have become more challenging tasks. My grandmother uses her free-time to write poetry and my grandfather enjoys classic cinema, but they have to struggle with other issues that affect the way they direct their energies. They live in a town with a modest yet thriving art community, with poetry, and music, and cinema events that they would like to enjoy, but under current circumstances they are unable to take advantage of these opportunities. Attending art events like evening poetry readings is unreasonable because my grandmother's night-blindness makes it unsafe for her to drive after dark. Also, the financial burden and young target audience of these events are sometimes deterrents for an older person. However, if there were an interesting daytime program that was reasonably priced, well-planned, and easy to travel to, she and my grandfather would be able to share their knowledge, talent and passion with others, learn new things and gain new experiences in the process.

Unfortunately, at this time, I do not have the means to change the situation in the city where my grandparents reside, but I do have the opportunity to investigate and address the situation in the city where I live. I suspect there are others like my grandparents, here in Austin, who want to participate in the arts but do not have the opportunity because of similar obstacles. I hope my research will serve as the impetus for visual arts programming for older adults in Austin by providing educators with a reliable information source on which to plan new education programs for older adults. The program suggestions I make in Chapter VIII illustrate possible directions educators may take with their programs. Ultimately, it is my hope that the research I have conducted locally will result in the creation of new art education programs for older adults in Austin,

and also inspire art educators in other cities and towns to expand programming for older adults in their communities.

TERMS

It is necessary to clarify the terms “older adults,” “senior citizens,” and “seniors,” as adults age 65 and older. Age 65 was determined to be the minimum age for this study because many studies in the field of gerontology set age 65 as the lower age limit of older adults, also in the U.S., 65 years of age is the minimum age to receive full Social Security benefits. “Creative Aging” is a term used to define educational and cultural activities that aim to improve the quality of life for senior citizens through the pursuit of creative endeavors, such as the literary, theatrical, visual and musical arts (Cohen, 2000). For the purposes of my research, I am forced to reluctantly define “visual art” as two-dimensional and three-dimensional media with a predominantly visual component, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, print-making, crafts, drawing, collage, textile arts, film, video art, photography and computer arts. For purposes of this study, it is necessary to divide visual art from other artforms like dance, music, creative writing, and acting in order for me to create a manageable pool of data.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted to identify art learning preferences of older adult participants at local senior centers and art museums. A purposive sampling method, as opposed to a random sampling method, was utilized (Morse & Richards, 2002). I estimated that I would need to collect at least 100 questionnaires before reliable patterns would emerge. After collecting 80 surveys, patterns were emerging, but I decided it was important to meet my initial quota. In the end, I surveyed 107 senior citizens.

The majority of my data comes from questionnaires that focused on several key aspects of art and leisure learning. I asked older adults about current interests, attitudes toward various art media, presentation preferences, and learning goals. I asked participants to rate their interest level in the various learning topics in order to uncover the topics seniors care about most. Participants also rated learning format preference questions in order to determine the lesson formats older adults prefer most (for example, lectures versus hands-on activities). Participants answered questions regarding preferred art media in order to indicate the areas of visual art older adults are most eager to learn about, and thus which media should be offered. Inquiries into learning goals uncovered popular motives for engaging in educational activities. All answers were scored by a numerical system used to evaluate and compare across variables of gender, age, education level, and research site. See Chapter III for a more lengthy discussion of data and survey instruments.

LOCATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECRUITING

The following institutions were kind enough to grant me access to their patrons: Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center (CGSAC), Lamar Senior Activity Center (LSAC), South Austin Senior Activity Center (SASAC), Blanton Museum of Art (BMA), and Austin Museum of Art (AMOA). I chose these specific institutions because they represent a range of socio-economic, racial, educational backgrounds and learning motivations from which to pull a diverse sample of participants. I recruited participants as they entered and exited the facilities, introduced my study, asked a limited number of introductory questions, and inquired if candidates would be willing to fill out a questionnaire. After participants completed the survey, I gave them the option of also conducting a brief one-question interview, which I recorded on a handheld tape-recorder. I informed each participant of his/her rights to join in this study through a cover letter on

the first page of the questionnaire. Participants filled out the brief questionnaire in typically ten to fifteen minutes and conducted the optional interviews in five to ten minutes. The interviews were always conducted at the same time and site as the questionnaire. The specific wording of the interview question evolved as I gained experience during my research, but the question asked: “What, if any, education programs would you like to see offered for older adults in Austin?” Confidentiality of the participants was protected because I did not collect any information that could connect the individual to the data. As a compensation for their time, I thanked participants with free museum passes, which were generously donated by the AMOA and BMA.

HYPOTHESIS

Going into this study, I expected to find that older adults would desire programs that promote personal growth, self worth, autonomy and means of expression. In regards to social needs, I anticipated that many older adults would value programs that foster connections with other people, and offer avenues in which to share their accomplishments and talents with others. I imagined that seniors would express more interest in programs that: have physical or cognitively stimulating aspects, capitalize on their wealth of life experience, help them make sense of their personal history, or allow them to achieve a sense of mastery in previously abandoned or unexplored interests. I also expected that seniors would express a desire for a variety of novel, meaningful, enjoyable experiences.

PARTICIPANTS AND LIMITATIONS TO RESEARCH

The study was limited to older adults that are physically and cognitively able to participate in arts and education programs. Older adults in recreation centers were chosen for this study, instead of older adults in nursing homes or private residences, because

these are the first subgroups of people that would logically be more likely to participate in new programs and are thus potentially untapped resources for art institutions. They are socially and mentally active; they are interested and willing to participate in educational and recreational programs, but may not necessarily be involved in art *yet*. I interviewed individuals in museum programs because they already have an interest in art and would be able to share insight into why they chose to participate in art programs. I did not study older adult students in university or community college programs because these programs are generally more formal, more expensive, and require more academic pre-requisites than museum and recreation settings and would thus result in a considerable socio-economic bias. Although individual people in private residents and of assisted living and nursing homes were not chosen for this study, these would be worthy groups for future research. I have also limited my study to people who speak English, but the Spanish-speaking population in Austin would be an important group to address as well. Although I tried to obtain as diverse a participant pool as possible, the majority of the people that were qualified and willing to participate were college educated females, so my results reflect a bias towards the preferences of this demographic. The age range was wide with 51% aged 65-75 years old, and 49% aged 75-95 years old. Also, I was able to acquire the most participation from the South Austin Senior Center, so the preferences stated here also reflect a bias towards the preferences of participants at that research site. This information is discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

As previously stated, I relied on the purposive sampling method where I sought participants with certain characteristics: over 65, cognitively and physically capable of participating in education programs, and voluntarily active in recreational programs (Morse & Richards, 2002). Data was coded continuously and compared to the hypothesis

as data collection continued. Most of the data came from questionnaires that were coded using Microsoft Excel and the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. Participants answered the questions on a paper survey, which was then entered into SurveyMonkey for tallying purposes. The data was then sorted and downloaded, based on certain variables, into Excel. The survey included several write-in questions that were coded manually. After all surveys were coded, the interviews were scanned for insights vis-à-vis the survey data.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

Research in art education programs specifically for older adults is small, but several disciplines relate to the topic and have abundant research that have informed my work: Educational Gerontology, Adult Education, and Art-Therapy. In this chapter, I address issues such as the changing demographics of the older adult population, the heterogeneity of the older adult population, obstacles toward learning in later life, creativity in later life, and the history of older adult education and art programs. My intention for discussing the background of art programs for older adults is to help program developers understand this issue and this audience more keenly.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

It is impossible to address the importance of older adult programs without discussing the rapidly changing demographics of older adults in Texas. Nationwide, this population is booming, and in Texas specifically, the older adult population increased 18.8% between the 1990 and 2000 census (Texas Dept. on Aging, 2003, p 17). According to the Texas Department on Aging, there are over 2.7 million people over the age of 60 living in Texas, approximately 150,000 of which live in the Capital area (Texas Dept. on Aging, 2003, p. 27, Fig. 2.11). As Baby Boomers age, this segment of the population is expected to grow even more rapidly than it has in recent years. The projected population for older Texans by year 2040 is expected to reach 8.1 million, which is an increase of 193% from today (Texas Dept. on Aging, 2003, p. 10). Currently, among adults 60 and older, females outnumber males, Anglo-Americans outnumber minorities, and people aged 60-74 outnumber those aged 75 and over. Due to positive changes in the greater social structure that have occurred over the last fifty years (better healthcare, education, increased standards of living for the poor and minorities, etc.), these gaps are expected to

decrease as the population becomes more diverse. The proportion of older Hispanic adults is especially expected to increase. With all this anticipated demographic change, it is crucial that educators and activity directors put programs in place to serve these changing needs.

HETEROGENEITY OF THE OLDER ADULT POPULATION

Making generalizations about the average learner is very difficult, making generalizations about the older adult learner is especially challenging. Factors such as learning style, socio-economic background, gender, cultural background, prior knowledge, experience, physical abilities, mental abilities, and learning goals differ for every person (Hoffman, 1992). Differences in genetics, circumstance, and choices made over a lifetime place people at different stages of physical and mental ability despite their age in calendar years. Thus, it is important to appreciate and respond to the wide spectrum of backgrounds, experience, and abilities that a group of older adults will possess (DiJulio & Leinbach, 1992). Even though the adult population is varied and complex, research in adult education has formed numerous models that generalize some of the ways in which adults learn (Knowles, 1973). Likewise, research in gerontology has helped to generalize some of the concerns that many older adults share.

Because of socio-economic disparities, minority older adults statistically do not age as well as non-minorities (Hooyman & Kuyak, 2005). Women live longer than men, but suffer more financial difficulties because of their longer lives and lower incomes (Hooyman & Kuyak, 2005). Social changes are taking place that are improving conditions for older minorities and women, but historically they have been at a disadvantage and have had to face more physical and financial challenges than their white male counterparts. Program planners should be aware of these discrepancies and how they may need to adjust their programs to accommodate special needs that may

arise. For instance, one might find that program participants from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods have more physical challenges than participants from privileged neighborhoods, therefore the character of outreach programs may need to vary by neighborhood.

Socio-economic background, age, gender, and education level are significant factors affecting the way an individual learns, but factors like personality and the learner's prior knowledge, cause the greatest differentiation among this population (Courtenay & Truluck, 1999). The longer an individual lives, the richer, more complex, and more unique their particular body of knowledge becomes, thus the more unique and separate the individual becomes. This complexity leaves the program planner with the challenging task of deciding on a set of assumed knowledge that can effectively serve as a starting place from which to develop an educational program.

OBSTACLES TO LEARNING IN LATER LIFE

Although many older adults do already participate in educational programs, systemic barriers cause many of these programs to be both underdeveloped and underutilized. Atchley (1997) states that less than 15% of older adults take advantage of senior centers. The Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area (R. Glenn, personal communication, July 25, 2007) determined through a series of focus groups that many older adults were prevented from accessing services for older adults for a variety of reasons. A frequently expressed reason for not utilizing services was ignorance of services available and how to access them. Among other obstacles cited were: language barriers, feeling overwhelmed by the system, fear of criticism, lack of information, isolation, and transportation. In this same study older adults also expressed concerns about the availability of support services, learning opportunities, ways to stay active, intergenerational activities, and societal attitudes toward older adults (R. Glenn, personal

communication, July 25, 2007). Boulton-Lewis and Purdies' (2003) investigation into the learning needs of older adults revealed that the strongest barriers dealt with issues of transportation and physical disabilities. The T.D.A.D.S. (2005) *Aging Texas Well* indicators survey found that the most popular reasons for not participating in education programs were transportation barriers, lack of appealing programs, poor health, and ignorance of available programs. Walker et al. (2004) confirmed transportation to be a major factor affecting senior center participation, as well as knowledge of available programs, and number and age of other participants. Greenberg (1987) points out that many older adults did not have art education when they were in school and thus this lack of exposure may be an additional deterrent for participation in art programs.

Personal insecurities about one's ability to perform in an educational setting may also deter some older adults from participating in educational programs. A German study by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (as cited in Dohmen, 1998) found that individuals concerned about their mental fitness are likely to avoid activities that may expose any cognitive difficulties. The extent to which aging affects cognitive ability is controversial. Although many older adults experience a slowing-down of cognitive processes, there is little evidence to suggest that there is any true decline in learning ability as a person ages (Schaie, 1994; Altgassen & Kliegel, 2006). Older adults subjectively find it harder to learn things in later years than in their younger life. Evidence suggests that changes to short-term memory and fluid intelligence cause older adults to require more time to process information and more repetition than younger adults, but their ability to process and retain information is comparable to that of younger adults (Hooyman & Kuyak, 2005; Kliegel & Altgassen, 2006). Inter-individual differences appear to play a larger role than age per se (Kliegel & Altgassen, 2006). Dohman (1998) offers this possible explanation: "with an increased volume and variety of information of already stored

experiences and patterns, any new piece of information will be compared and related to an equally increased amount of insights, ideas, and interpretation patterns” (p. 7). In other words, as a person ages and accumulates more information, it takes the brain longer to process new information because there is more existing information through which to sort.

Aging is largely defined as a process of physical changes that take place in the body. These changes, especially to the sense organs, affect the way a person receives information and thus the way they learn. Common changes to the sensory organs are the deterioration of vision, hearing, touch and smell. Older eyes have weaker muscles, take longer to adjust to changing light levels, do not see as well in low light, perceive depth less accurately, and do not differentiate color hues as well, especially in the violet-blue-green range (Hooyman & Kuyak, 2005). Men and women tend to develop hearing trouble differently: men have more difficulty hearing high tones while women have more difficulty hearing low tones (Hoffman, 1992). For the sense of touch, some sensitivity is lost to texture and temperature. The deterioration to the sense of smell, although it may not seem like an immediate impediment to learning, can hinder memory recollection because the olfactory sense is so keenly tied to memory (Hoffman, 1992). Although most seniors do not have impairments that would prevent them from participating in education programs, a significant number do have conditions that may affect the way they participate or prefer to learn (DiJulio & Leinbach, 1992).

CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE

Historically in Western culture, later life has been perceived negatively as a time of decline, but fortunately this faulty perception is changing. In our youth-obsessed culture, ageist misconceptions still persist, but thanks to positively changing cultural attitudes they are becoming less pervasive. Later life is now beginning to be understood

as a time of valuable opportunity for enjoyment and personal betterment. Aging advocates like the Grey Panthers, the American Association of Retired Peoples, the National Center for Creative Aging, and the National Center for Aging, Health and the Humanities are persuading society to focus on the positive things gained with age, like wisdom, freedom, and opportunity (Cohen, 2000, p 5).

Educational and creative pursuits are seen as a primary vehicle for leisure and personal growth. Jarvis (2001) found that learning can be therapeutic for older people because it gives them a way of finding meaning, discovering themselves and forming identity. Creativity -- that somewhat mysterious concept which art educators, psychologists, and philosophers have struggled to understand for so many years -- is at the center of a surge of interest in programming for older adults. The language surrounding creativity and aging promotes creativity as an inherently human trait, which if not a visibly active force, is understood as a power that only lies dormant waiting to be aroused. The drive for creativity in later life comes from a need for continued personal growth, and a desire to age successfully by remaining actively engaged (Cohen, 2000; Ekherdt, 1986, p. 239). Art therapy studies with older adults have shown art activities build self-esteem, encourage social interaction, reduce stress, stimulate the senses, body and mind (Magniant, 2004). Other research has well established the many varied benefits of creative and educational pursuits in later life (Ardelt, 2000; Greenberg, 1987; Jarvis, 2001; Mehrota, 2003).

This argument gained significant ground when the results of a recent study conducted by Dr. Gene Cohen of the George Washington University Medical Center showed the physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits of engaging in cultural arts activities. Funded partly by the National Institute for Mental Health and the National Endowment for the Arts, the study of creative aging has found that participants in the

study who were involved in cultural arts programs enjoyed “higher overall rating of physical health, fewer doctor visits, less medication use, fewer instances of falls,” as well as “better morale,” “less loneliness” and increased involvement in activities (Cohen, 2006, p. 726). His study attempts to establish concretely that creative activity increases mental and emotional health, which in turn results in improved physical health. This correlation between mental health and creativity may sound to a weary art educator almost too good to be true. However, if upon continued review and analysis the results do in fact prove to be accurate, the implications for art education will be enormous. Art Educators and Senior Center Program directors who have so fervently battled to promote their programs will have a much easier time procuring program funding and institutional support.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND ART PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS

The professional field of Educational Gerontology is only about thirty years old, (Glendenning, 2001; Manheimer, 1998), which makes it as new as the field of Museum Education. Awareness about the educational needs of society’s older members began to gain momentum in the 1960s and ’70s with the passing of the Older Americans Act of 1965 and the Lifelong Learning Act of 1975. The impact of legislation and shifting cultural values inspired societal action on behalf of the older adults welfare and education. Research has found that the more education one has, the more likely he or she is to participate in education programs (Cross, 1981; Dohman, 1998). By the 1970s in the United States, more Americans were participating in education programs because more Americans were college educated as a result of the G.I. Bill, thus demand and interest in such programs was growing (Manheimer, 1998). According to Manheimer, (1998) there was a populist attitude in the 1970s in which free programs were able to flourish thanks to government subsidies and private donations. It was during this time that a social

service model of adult education emerged that used education to solve problems of survival. Many early programs were concerned with “retraining workers” and maintaining “economic productivity” (Glendenning, 2001, p 65). Moody (1985) addressed the philosophical concerns associated with this model, particularly the seemingly positive, but faulty, assumptions that many advocates for older adult education programs perpetuate.

The concerns Moody raised in 1985 still apply, as this model continues to color the character of current programs. Today, however, older adult education programs are steadily expanding to achieve increasingly varied and complex goals. Community college programs and Lifelong Learning Institutes that began in 1970s gave momentum to a tidal shift. Nutrition centers that originally concerned themselves with health needs, began including more and more programs to address social, educational, and recreational needs. Elderhostel, an organization that offers a diverse array of education and travel opportunities for older adults has enjoyed runaway success, which is a testament to the quality of their innovative programs, but also to the increasingly fervent intellectual curiosity of the older adult demographic. Savishinsky (2001) describes the new attitude toward retirement as “not experienced as freedom from work, but rather freedom to work, finally at the endeavors of [one's] own choosing, to engage in a passion that [is] more than a profession, to pursue a mission that [is] not just a job” (p. 51).

THE CURRENT STATE OF OLDER ADULT ART EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Interest has grown steadily through the years, but now that the Baby-Boomer generation is reaching retirement, the educational gerontology field is experiencing a program boom in anticipation of the demand and dollars the Baby Boomers possess. Part of the reason for the program explosion is that older adults are more educated now than in the past, and “education begets education” (Brady & Lamb, 2005, p 209). Nationwide, art

and education programs have developed in a grassroots manner due to the dedication and pluck of pioneering educators. Greenberg (1987) offered a list of universities, community colleges, hospitals, and community centers that independently offer art programs specifically for older adults. Other locations offer art programs that are utilized by older adults (if not specifically created for them) are religious institutions, libraries, community colleges, and department stores (Hoffman, 1992). Elizabeth Sharpe (1992) raised awareness of the need for older adult museum program expansion in her article that discussed the benefits of the Smithsonian museum's program for older adults. The call to action for museum educators to work collectively to expand museum programming for older adults has been sounded, and is beginning to receive attention.

Several art institutions nationwide have picked up the cause by creating model programs that serve the needs of older adults, (See Appendix I for a resource list of abbreviated program information). The programs I located were very diverse in terms of content and scope, but shared similar histories, goals, and program structures. Most programs held to the same basic but effective formula of informal lecture/tour programs that foster discussion, engage critical thinking skills, and encourage social interaction among participants. Most programs I contacted began less than ten years ago as collaborations between highly motivated staff and pre-existing organizations serving older adults. Some became older adult programs because the audience that chose to attend was largely made up of people in the older age bracket. Outreach programs do currently exist, but for many museums the priority is to bring more people through the doors. Often, these programs operate as leisure learning teas with light refreshments, informal discussion, and social interaction as the key elements. The educators with whom I spoke largely attributed the success of their programs to the program's ability to meet

participants' needs for high levels of intellectual engagement and the opportunity to socialize and remain active.

Locally there are several institutions serving the educational needs of older adults (see Appendix I for a resource list), but the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (T.D.A.D.S.) study found that only eight percent of older adults in Texas participate in education programs. The same study also determined that over three quarters of older adults report having a hobby or recreational interest, and over half report that recreation and leisure activities are “very important” to their lives: this indicates that the interest in education and recreation exists, but for whatever reason, people are not taking advantage of currently available opportunities. Art programming specifically created for older adults is scarce. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department generously offers ceramics, quilting, crafts, and painting activities at very little cost to participants. These modest budget programs are very successful and well enjoyed by their participants, but could benefit greatly from increased funding and professional art-education guidance. Art programs for older adults have previously been criticized for their meager content, reach and scope (Greenberg, 1987; Hoffman, 1992; Magniant 2004), but this does not necessarily apply to all senior art programming in Austin. Fortunately local activity directors at Austin-area senior centers have ambitiously established popular art programs, which art educators now have the opportunity to build upon and develop further (See Chapter IX for a more in-depth discussion of program suggestions).

Chapter III: Methodology

This study was a survey of visual art learning preferences held by older adult participants within Austin area senior centers and museums. I distributed paper surveys containing 49 questions that asked older adults to rate their interest in various learning topics, art media, learning formats and goals for participating in education programs. Brief, optional interviews were also conducted to supplement the survey responses. I modeled the questions, themes, and structure of my survey after marketing and education surveys that seek to determine consumer and learner preferences. This study was based on needs-assessment, marketing survey, and education program evaluation models (Brady & Lamb, 2005; Hoffman, 1992; Neuber, 1980).

SURVEY DESIGN

The creation of the questions and categories for this survey was a lengthy process of literature reviews, program reviews (see programs listed in Appendix I), and consultations with professionals in the field,¹ as well as a synthesis of my knowledge of the subject of older adult recreational learning. For learning subjects and art media, questions and categories were based on topics that were commonly offered at senior recreation centers, lifelong learning programs, and art institutions, (see programs listed in Appendix I), as well as art education and educational gerontology literature (Glendenning, 2001; Hoffman, 1992; Manheimer, Snodgrass, & Moskow-McKenzie, 1995). For the learning format questions, categories were based on formats currently

¹ Professionals consulted: Kathleen Boas, Ph.D.- Instructor of Social Gerontology, University of Texas at Austin; Paul Bolin, Ph.D.- Professor of Art Education, University of Texas at Austin; Martha Bradshaw- Visitor Services Manager, Blanton Museum of Art; Eva Buttacavoli- Director of Exhibits and Education, Austin Museum of Art; Tiffany Cabin- Activity Director, South Austin Senior Activity Center; Namkee Choi, Ph.D.- Professor of Social Gerontology, University of Texas at Austin; Christina Hiatt- Visitor Services Manager, Austin Museum of Art; Anne Manning- Curator of Education, Blanton Museum of Art; Amy Russell- Activity Director, Conley-Guererro Senior Activity Center; Brian Whisenhunt- Public Programs Manager, Blanton Museum of Art.

offered at these institutions, (lectures, series, etc.), as well as less commonly used learning formats, (collaborative projects, distance learning, etc.), according to my knowledge of education practice. As for learning goals, categories and questions were based on probable social and psychological goals for education program participation according to current literature (Brady & Lamb, 2005; Hoffman, 1992; Kim & Merriam, 2004; Omrod, 2004). Drafts of the survey were submitted to professionals in education, art, visitor services and marketing who consulted me in the survey design. Based on the advice of these experts, I revised the categories, verbiage, and structure of the survey until I had an effective, streamlined survey instrument.

Many of the experts that were kind enough to offer consultation on the construction of the survey, were also generous enough to grant access to their patrons: Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center (CGSAC), Lamar Senior Activity Center (LSAC), South Austin Senior Activity Center (SASAC), Blanton Museum of Art (BMA), and the Austin Museum of Art (AMOA). I recruited participants as they entered and exited the facilities, introduced my study, asked a limited number of introductory questions, and inquired if candidates would be willing to fill out a questionnaire in-situ. Participants rated their interest level in the various learning topics in order to uncover the topics seniors care about most. Participants also rated learning format preference questions in order to determine the lesson formats older adults prefer most (for example, informal versus formal). Participants answered questions regarding preferred art media in order to indicate the areas of visual art older adults are most eager to learn about, and thus which media should be offered. Inquiries into learning goals uncovered popular motives for engaging in educational activities. I gathered information from participants regarding their age, gender, education level and previous occupation, in order to analyze responses along these variables. Although I collected occupational information, in the end I decided

not to analyze the data using this variable because in this particular study it was not useful. As a compensation for their time, participants were rewarded with free museum passes, which were generously donated by the AMOA and BMA.

INTERVIEWS

After participants completed the survey, they were given the option to conduct a brief one-question interview, which I recorded on a handheld tape-recorder. Participants gave their responses to the question: “What, if any, education programs would you like to see offered for older adults in Austin?” These responses were then coded for key phrases and ideas in order to supplement survey data. The specific wording of the interview question developed as the research progressed. Participants filled out the brief questionnaire in typically ten to fifteen minutes and conducted the optional interviews in anywhere from five to ten minutes, depending on wordiness of the participant. The informal interviews did not greatly aid my analysis by offering new information; instead the interviews mostly served to reflect what participants said through their survey responses. However, the interviews did offer some valuable insight about the attitudes older adults have towards education programs and art, which would be worth exploring further. One of the themes that reoccurred was that participants appeared to have a somewhat limited definition of “education” as being something reserved for formal classes. Another prominent theme was that many individuals spoke proudly of their education and community involvements also seemed to identify themselves as separate from their peers, and exceptions from the norm. Future studies should examine these attitudes more fully.

PARTICIPANTS

Older adults in local museums and senior activity centers were chosen for the survey because they are generally healthy, interested in learning, and are physically and cognitively able to participate in learning activities. Although these participants may not necessarily be involved in art activities, they would be the most likely candidates as new program participants. Senior center sites in different areas of town were chosen in an effort to ensure a diverse data pool. My participant pool was 71% female, 29% male. 51% of participants were under 75, 49% were aged 75 or older. The majority of participants were female, those with a post-secondary school education, and under 75 years old, which is typical of senior center participant populations (Fischer 1979 as cited by Brady & Lamb, 2005). According to Walker et al. (2004), senior centers are attended by those who are “primarily healthy under the age of 85, with low to middle income” (p. 355).

SURVEY COLLECTION

Collecting the surveys was a pleasant experience. I recruited participants by greeting them, introducing myself, explaining the study, and asking them to participate (refer to Appendix A for survey instrument). I enjoyed talking with patrons because they were very friendly and shared many interesting stories and opinions with me. At the senior centers, announcements were made over the intercom to inform people of the study and how to participate. Senior center and museum patrons were very interested in the research and eager to help, but some were more eager than others. Decline responses were typical: candidates “did not have time,” or they were “in a hurry,” or they were “just not interested.” One candidate said, “Well, I've learned about everything I want to learn by now. I just prefer to relax.” Although I did not fastidiously track declines, I would estimate that I talked to approximately 250 people, out of whom approximately 150

qualified for the study, and 107 agreed, therefore the response rate for qualified candidates was very good. I attribute the high response rate to my friendly approach, effective “pitch,” and the attractive compensation of free museum passes. It is interesting to note that women were more willing to talk and participate than men. Most of the male participants were somewhat more skeptical and required more convincing before they agreed to participate. This may reflect gender differences associated in attitudes toward socializing and educational activities.

Most participants filled out the survey without any problems, but a few questions did arise, especially in regards to “video art,” with which few people were familiar. Surveys were conducted in the lobbies and common areas of the sites. Participants were handed surveys on a clipboard and most people chose to fill out the survey right away, while some preferred to find another spot to sit and fill it out as they took breaks between other activities. To my amusement and astonishment at the LSAC, one gentleman impressed me by filling out the survey in between turns at billiards. Most people filled out the questionnaire with ease, but one participant grew impatient with the survey and filled out the first half, complained that it was too long, and then breezed through the rest of it by apparently marking answers arbitrarily. As this person had not taken the survey seriously, I had to disqualify the entry.

As people turned in completed surveys, I glanced over them to be sure that all of the answers were completed. When participants accidentally skipped questions, I asked them to mark their responses. To my surprise on more than one occasion, participants streamlined the survey themselves by only marking positive responses and not negative ones. When I received a survey with many of the questions apparently skipped intentionally, participants explained that all of the skipped questions were to be understood as answers of “Not True at All.” When this happened, I made a note on the

entry as to how the participant had filled out the questionnaire. Later, when I entered answers in to SurveyMonkey, I entered in the blanks as “not true at all” as the participant had indicated.

Survey Collection at the Austin Museum of Art

The Visitor Services Manager at the Austin Museum of Art, (AMOA), generously granted access to the museum and patrons. At first, collecting surveys at the AMOA went slowly. My initial attempt was on a Friday afternoon, when I sat at a reading table in the back corner of the museum. After four hours, I had not collected a single survey because there were no qualified participants. The next day I came back and this time sat at a more prominent place near the front of the gallery, but still there were not enough qualified candidates. Most of the museum attendants that day were tourists, young couples, and families. My third attempt was much more fruitful. I conducted surveys on a day when the exhibiting artist was giving a lecture. The artist in question, Lu Ann Barrow, is a local painter, who is herself in her seventies. She is apparently popular with the older adult audience and there were many more qualified candidates that day. Many participants also reported that they were friends and customers of Ms. Barrow and that she had directly invited them to the exhibit. Instead of sitting inside the gallery, I sat outside the entrance and greeted people as they entered and exited the museum. That particular Saturday was also a University of Texas football game day, which meant the streets of downtown Austin, where the museum is located, were full of people and activity. This was good for attracting museum visitors to participate, but it was bad for conducting interviews because the street noise made recording difficult. That evening at the museum there was also an opening for an exhibit of a local newspaper’s photographs from the last 20 years, which also attracted a diverse crowd. I collected 18 surveys at the AMOA. In terms of gender, three were male and 15 were female. As for education, six people had an

education level of secondary school or less, and 12 people had a post-secondary school education or higher. With regard to age, 10 people were 74 years old or younger, and eight people were 75 years old or older.

Survey Collection at the Blanton Museum of Art

The Blanton Museum of Art , (BMA), coordinated with me to locate the best time, and place to conduct my study. I chose to spend one Thursday afternoon and one full Sunday at the Blanton Museum of Art because, according to their Visitor Services, those are the best attendance days at the museum. Although the museum was in fact very busy on those two days, I unfortunately was not able to recruit enough qualified participants. The Blanton Museum of Art is well attended by people over 65, but unfortunately for me, they were all from other locations: Baltimore, Philadelphia, San Diego, Tallahassee, Houston, and Dallas, but not from Austin. I was only able to collect one survey from a gentleman over 65 from Austin, but since I was not able to collect any other surveys from this location, I did not admit the results into the study. The majority of people I talked to were visiting from San Antonio. Even if they were not qualified for the study, the people I talked to were all very friendly, and eager to participate, therefore it would be worthwhile to conduct a learning preference study with older adult tourists to see what programs may be popular with them.

Survey Collection at the South Austin Senior Activity Center

Survey collection at the South Austin Senior Activity (SASAC) was by far the most fruitful. When I was not able to meet my quota for the BMA, I came back to the SASAC to make up the difference. I visited the SASAC twice. My first visit was on a day when a quilting class was being held. At ten o'clock in the morning, I set up a table in the lobby and made an announcement over the loudspeaker to tell participants about the

study and how to participate. Right away, senior center participants came over to complete a survey. The SASAC is a very well attended senior center because of the quality of the facilities, good location and because it is a congregate meal site. After I failed to meet participant quotas at the BMA, I returned to the SASAC and collected surveys in the same manner as before. Once again, I sat in the lobby, but this time at the table where lunch tickets were distributed and I solicited participants as they went into the lunchroom. Of the 48 people who participated from SASAC, 13 were male and 35 were female. Fourteen participants had an education level of secondary school or lower, 29 participants held a post-secondary school education, and five listed “other” or skipped the question for education level. With regard to age, 26 were under 75, and 22 were over 75.

Lamar Senior Activity Center

The first location where I collected surveys was the Lamar Senior Activity Center (LSAC). I set up a table in the lobby near the reception desk. I came on a day that they were holding registration for class as well as a very popular bridge game that reportedly had over 75 players. There was also a lively group of gentleman in the lobby playing their weekly billiards game. One phenomenon that I encountered at this site, which made recruiting easier was that as participants completed their surveys, they would solicit their friends to participate as well. The LSAC is different from the SASAC and the CGSAC because it is not a congregate meal site, so the clientele is more affluent and they attend strictly for recreation and education purposes. I collected a total of 20 surveys at this location. Of those 20 people, 11 people were male and nine were female. Five people had an education level up to but not exceeding secondary school, 14 people had a post-secondary school education, and one person skipped the education level question. As for age, six people were 74 years old or under, and 14 were 75 years old or over.

Survey Collection at the Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center

Conducting surveys at the Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center (CGSAC) was somewhat more challenging, but the participants were very curious about the study and willing to help. I set up at table in the lunchroom in the mid-morning and was pleasantly surprised when people came over to ask questions even before I was ready to start. I made an announcement during lunch, and collected surveys at a table in the lunchroom for a while, but after lunch the room cleared out and people stopped approaching me. At this point, I walked around the center and visited various recreation rooms and activities and asked people to participate. Background noise posed a problem again for interviews when I tried to record responses from participants in a room where a lively game of dominoes was being played. Conducting surveys at this site was more difficult because many of the participants were Spanish speakers, younger than my minimum age, or were not in as good health as participants at other sites, which meant that communicating was sometimes more difficult and also that there were fewer qualified candidates.

The CGSCA center is located in Austin's historically predominately minority-populated East side. The relatively poorer health of CGSAC participants is unfortunately typical of minority older adults in Texas due to decades of socio-economic disadvantages (T.D.A.D.S, 2005). On three occasions at this site, I was approached by individuals who seemed to be cognitively impaired, but wanted to participate. There were also a couple people who wanted to participate, but wanted me to read the study to them because of site impairments. For these individuals, I helped them complete the survey by reading it with them and helping them mark their answers, and gave them the museum tickets as a thank-you, but I did not admit these responses into the survey because the responses were collected in such a different manner. There were a great many participants at the CGSAC who are Spanish speakers. For this reason, I was not able to gain information from them.

As the older Hispanic population in Austin continues to expand, it will be important to determine their preferences as well. Participants at this site were very eager to participate and very interested in education programs, therefore it will be worthwhile to revisit this site under different research parameters in order to include site-impaired persons, Spanish speakers, and people 55-65 years of age.

ANALYSIS

After collecting surveys, answers were entered into Survey and filtered by site, age, gender, and question. The data sets were divided by variable, then downloaded into Excel and further analyzed. In Excel, all answers were scored by a point system and compared across variables of gender, age, education level, and research site. Participants were given a list of statements and asked to respond by indicating how well it described them. For example, in response to the statement “I enjoy learning about history,” participants answered “very true,” “true,” “somewhat true” or “not true at all.” To tally responses, answers of “very true,” “true,” and “somewhat true” were assigned 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively. Answers of “not true at all” were not assigned any points. Totals for each statement were added, and then average scores were calculated by dividing the score by the total number of responses. Data tables located in the Appendices illustrate the scoring system.

My method of sampling was the purposive sampling method, which I sought participants with certain characteristics; over 65 years of age, physically and cognitively able to participate in education programs, and already voluntarily active in recreation programs (Morse & Richards, 2002). The questionnaire stayed the same to protect the integrity of the questions, but adjustments were made to the screener, optional interviews, and choice of research sites as the study progressed. I estimated that I would need to collect at least 100 questionnaires before reliable patterns would emerge. After collecting

80 surveys, patterns began to emerge, but it was important to meet the initial quota. In the end, I was able to use data from 107 senior citizens who participated in the survey. The following chapters discuss the results of the study.

Chapter IV: Preferred Areas of Study

As people age, many become more concerned with “time left to live rather than time since birth” (Neugarten & Datan, 1974 as cited in Beatty & Wolf, 1996, p. 18). Since older adults are more acutely aware of the precious value of time, it is very important that activities be rewarding and perceived as “worthwhile” (Beatty & Wolf, 1996, p. 18). Therefore, offering interesting, rewarding activities is important when trying to attract the older adult audience. This chapter examines the results of my survey in regards to preferred areas of study, which seeks to determine which topics older adults find most interesting.

Participants were asked to rate a list of subjects based on typical recreational and academic interests. I have organized the results by gender, age, education level, and topic of interest. Results varied across demographic variables, but overall I found the most popular learning topics to be history, nature, places and cultures, religion/spirituality, and health/fitness. Overall, the most preferred area of study was “places and cultures.” The least popular were film/movies, technology, and lastly, sports. In this chapter I examine the results for each subject and make suggestions for future art education programs.

PLACES AND CULTURES

“Places and cultures” was the most popular area of study, as recorded by the survey results. It was most favored at the AMOA, and more highly regarded by men than women, and those under age 75. Ardel (2000) argues for expansion of humanities courses for older adults to help older adults make meaning of their own lives and “place their own lives in the larger frame of human culture” (p. 786). Ardel argues that the psychological and spiritual concerns that accompany aging can be addressed through learning about other culture's philosophies and answers to existential questions. The

identity-loss that many older adults experience upon retirement can be remedied through life review and intellectual and artistic exploration of self. Ardelit asserts that the popularity of humanities and arts programs for older adults is attributed to the particularly pressing need for fulfillment and meaning that individuals often experience in later life.

HISTORY

History was one of the most popular learning topics, which received second-place behind “places and cultures.” As these two subjects are similar, it is not surprising that they were rated similarly. As older adults have a more acute awareness of the passage of time (Hoffman, 1992), their interest in history is also not surprising. Many older adults feel very compelled to make meaning of their lives and personal experiences by reminiscing and thinking about the past (Ardelit, 2000; Mehrota, 2003). Whether it be the history of one’s town, the history of one’s own country or the history of the world, studying the past may help facilitate an individual’s understanding of his or her own story. History received universally high scores among all sites, ages and genders, but it was ranked most highly by women.

For history, reminiscence needs could be addressed by creating a program of history of the 20th Century in a way that relates personal experience to public history. The histories of other times and cultures are also relevant and beneficial pursuits, but participants should be given many opportunities to relate the content of the course to their own lived experiences. In the optional interviews conducted for this study, one participant expressed an interest in “local history,” which would also be a wonderful opportunity for older adults to learn, but also to contribute to public knowledge. Oral and photo history projects could be conducted for the benefit of old and young alike.

NATURE

Nature was ranked in the top three of all the learning subjects. It was more popular with men than women, people under 75, and those with a post-secondary school education. Members of my participant pool that were least interested in nature were those with a secondary school education, and those over 75. With all the natural beauty and urban parks that Austin has to offer, programs dealing with education and involvement in the natural world may be well received, inexpensive, and relatively easy to organize. The possibilities are endless for art and education classes dealing with the theme of nature, but for art education a great place to start would be a nature-drawing class at Zilker Park. Photography, plein-air painting, Goldsworthy-inspired sculpture projects would also be worthwhile.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Activities that foster spirituality aid aging by offering coping strategies to deal with life's hardships and often opportunities for social support as well (T.D.A.D.S, 2005). The topic "religion and spirituality" was popularly ranked as 4 out of 12. It was most highly regarded at the CGSAC and AMOA, and was preferred by women, people with a secondary school education, and people under 75 years of age. It was least popular with participants at the LSAC and the SASAC. Participants expressed the importance of prayer in the write-in answers on the survey. Walker et al. (2004) found that the greatest predictor of participation in senior center activities was involvement in faith-based activities. The more involved an individual was in faith-based institutions, the more likely they were to participate in senior center programs. The authors explained that people who participate in religious institutions are often healthy enough to be involved in the community and are the types who enjoy being socially active. If the same principle can be applied to Austin's senior center population, this would explain the popularity of the

topics of religion and spirituality. The results also align with findings of the Aging Texas Well Indicators Survey administered by the Texas Department on Aging and Disability Services (T.D.A.D.S., 2005), which found that eighty-two percent of older Texans feel their spiritual life is very important.

A program that may be successful would be for older adult art program directors to team with leaders from local congregations to initiate programs that explore spirituality in art from various religious perspectives. Museums can encourage their older adult visitors to explore spirituality in art by bringing in leaders from local churches to lead tours and discussions of religious themes in art.

FITNESS AND HEALTH

Fitness and health ranked somewhat popular at number five out of twelve. Of all participants surveyed, those at the GCSAC were most interested in fitness and health. Women, people under 75, and those with a secondary school education were more interested in fitness and health, than were the other groups. The popular ratings at the CGSAC may have been influenced by the programming that particular day. I distributed my surveys in the afternoon on a day when a speaker from Travis County Health and Human Services had given a brief presentation during lunch, espousing the important benefits of consuming whole-grains and high-fiber foods. Fitness and health was a more popular topic at locations that were meal sites (CGSAC and SASAC) than locations that were not (AMOA and LSAC).

As an addition to traditional visual art programming, I would recommend offering no-impact dance and exercise courses to help build mind-body connection and relaxation techniques, for example Tai Chi and Yoga. Although these activities are not directly related to art education, the physical and mental benefits that come from encouraging mind-body health may facilitate the creative process.

MUSIC

Music was positioned in the middle at a rank of six out of 12. It was more popular at the CGSAC than other sites, and more highly regarded with women, people under 75, and those with a secondary school education. Music was least popular at the LSAC and the SASAC. Walker et al. (2004) also found that music was a program in high demand among senior center participants.

For music programs, an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates some of the more popular topics and art media with music is recommended, since music received a mid-range rating. Because people expressed so much interest in learning about “places and cultures,” a course that explores the music and art of a particular ethnic group, country or region may be worthwhile. One could also incorporate a particular art media or theme and tie it to its musical cousin, (such as abstract expressionist painting and jazz). Options for intergenerational programs between senior programs and local student ensembles, where student musicians could attend older adult programs to perform for or with older adult participants would also be a good place to start. Walker et al. (2004) recommends presenting various musical genres (like Southern gospel, country music, and British music of the 1960s) that appeal to different cohorts in order to attract more people, but in smaller groups that are more conducive to social interaction.

LITERATURE

Literature programs ranked in the middle, at number seven out of 12. It was rated higher by men, those under 75, and those with a post-secondary school education. Participants at the AMOA rated it highly as did participants at the LSAC. Literature was less popular with participants with a secondary school education and participants at the CGSAC and SASAC.

There are many possibilities for literature programs, or programs dealing with the written word. As literature was most popular at the AMOA, it is suggested that a book club or writer's club may be successful there. The writer's club could meet once per exhibition and connect to the themes of the collection. For example, for the exhibit of photographs from *Twenty-four Summers at the Barton Springs Pool* participants would be directed to write about the season of summer and what it means to them.

COOKING

Cooking received a middle ranking among preferred areas of study, situated just behind literature. It was most popular at the CGSAC, and with those under 75. Not surprisingly, women, more than men, reported a much higher interest in learning about cooking, which fits traditional Western gender roles.

For cooking classes, safety and food allergies are important concerns. Programs must be planned carefully and creatively. Simple demonstrations, discussions and taste-tests would be a great way to initiate such classes. Knife-work and heat should obviously be avoided or planned carefully. The BMA created an excellent example of this type of program last year when they offered a short workshop on Italian summer tarts, where participants assembled the dish from pre-prepared ingredients and worked with a professional chef to gently toast the tart. The workshop coincided with an exhibit of Italian Renaissance paintings and helped to build cultural context for enjoying the exhibit. A culinary history class that makes similar connections to art historical themes is another possibility. For example, one could discuss the spice trade's influence on food and art in terms of the influence of Orientalism on Western art and the new flavors introduced to Western food.

ART HISTORY

Art history received a low ranking of fourth to last, just behind cooking. Participants at the AMOA unsurprisingly rated art history much higher than participants from the senior activity centers. It was more popular with women people under 75, and people with a post-secondary school education.

I would suggest creating art history programs for older adults at the AMOA and LSAC. As the demographic most interested in this topic are women under 75 with a post-secondary school education, I would initially choose artwork and artists that deal with subjects they may be familiar with and relate to -- such as Mary Cassatt and Frida Kahlo, and expand out to less obvious choices as the program develops.

FILM AND MOVIES

Since the participants in my study had lived through the “Golden Age of Hollywood,” I had expected that “film and movies” would be a more popular topic. My grandfather, who partly inspired this study in the first place, was an avid cinema addict and sophisticated critic, so I had anticipated a more enthusiastic response from his peers. Film rated third to last behind art history. It was most popular with women, people with a post-secondary school education, and those under 75 years of age. It was ranked better at the CGSAC than at the other sites. One participant in the study suggested that groups should take field trips to the Paramount Theatre downtown for matinees of classic movies.

For film programs, I suggest initially choosing movies from the Golden Age, with which members of this population can identify. These films could be used as a launching pad for discussions, other activities and projects. Film selection should not be restricted to works of this time, but rather used as a starting point. Ideally, in any program for older

adults, the content should eventually be directed by the learners themselves and should evolve with the students' tastes and interests.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology was not rated highly in comparison to other subjects. It ranked second-to-last, ahead of sports. Men, people under 75, and those with a secondary school education were more interested than others to learn about technology. Also, this topic was more popular at the CGSAC than the other sites. In today's technologically dependent world, computer and technical skills are becoming a matter of survival. Without equal access to information about transportation, health, etc., older adults are at a disadvantage. Boulton-Lewis and Purdie's (2003) research about learning attitudes found that despite our increasing societal dependence on technology, the older adult population was not very concerned about learning about technology. Russell and Drew (as cited in Boulton-Lewis & Purdie, 2003) speculates that this low priority for learning technological skills may be due to financial and attitudinal barriers. The "digital divide" affecting older adults may occur because many older adults are not be able to afford the new technology, may not be able to transport themselves to technology education programs, or may not have confidence in their ability to use technological devices. Boulton-Lewis and Purdie (2003) also found that among this group women, more than men, expressed greater doubt as to their ability to learn to use computers. This may explain why women in my study reported a much lower interest in technology.

In my particular study I found that participants with a secondary school education reported a higher interest in learning about technology than did those with a post-secondary school education. This is in contrast to the rest of my study where, generally, people with a post-secondary school education reported a greater interest in learning. Perhaps those with a post-secondary school education have an easier time accessing the

information they need because of other skills they have developed through their education. Consequently, perhaps they do not feel the adverse affects of the “digital divide” as greatly. Senior Net is an organization with a local Austin branch that is attempting to bridge the digital divide by offering free computer classes to seniors. A great way to expand these programs to include Art Education would be to offer basic tutorials in digital media programs like Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, or Flash. I recommend that local artists team with Senior Net to offer digital media classes.

SPORTS

The topic of sports was the least popular area of study. Not surprisingly, men, more than women, were interested in learning about sports. Participants at the CGSAC rated sports higher than the other sites. People under 75 and those with a secondary school education were more interested in the subject of sports than those over 75 or those with a post-secondary school education. Women and participants at the AMOA were the least interested in learning about sports. However, the topic of health was rated highly because many older adults are interested in staying fit.

Due to these results, I would not recommend investing heavily in art programs that bridge sports appreciation interests at this time, except at CGSAC. Due to the popularity of sports at CGSAC, I would recommend starting a small, inexpensive sports club that meets to watch and discuss the game of the season. Outings to local highschool games would be a fun and less expensive way to enjoy sporting events live. A mutually beneficial intergenerational partnership between the senior center and the local highschool could be established, where senior center patrons could volunteer as mentors, ticket-takers, etc. and the high-school students could return the favor by volunteering at the senior center in various capacities. As for art institutions, it may be a rewarding challenge to explore the collection for ways to incorporate the topic of sports, perhaps

through exhibits of sports-themed art. Previous research has determined that the most popular sports for older adults are walking, fishing, swimming, bowling, boating, bicycling, camping, golf and billiards (National Sporting Goods Association as cited in Menchin, 1991).

OTHER AREAS OF STUDY

The most common write-in answer for other areas of study that subjects expressed interest for was gardening. I would recommend that an older adult program might wish to include a gardening club, or look at art through the gardener's lens. Another program idea that a participant suggested is an expert mentor program (similar to Junior Achievement) where retired professionals in all industries could teach seminars about their area of expertise. Participants submitted bird watching, flower arranging, genealogy, current affairs, foreign languages, space-exploration, anthropology, philosophy and "human interest" programs as other areas of study that participants would like to see offered. There were also requests for a wider variety of games, like variants of bridge and Scrabble.

CONCLUSION

Preferred areas of study appear to be influenced by age and gender lines in anticipated ways. Men rated topics that were traditionally "masculine," like sports and technology, higher than women. Women likewise rated "feminine" pursuits, like cooking and textile arts, higher than how men ranked these items. In general, people under 75 years of age, rather than over 75 years of age, expressed a higher interest in learning about the range of topics listed. Education level did not appear to relate to topics of interest because both groups rated topics similarly, however those with a post-secondary school education were less interested in sports, and more interested in literature, but those

with a secondary school education rated sports more highly than literature. Participants at the different locations rated topics similarly as well, with few exceptions.

Chapter V: Preferred Art Media

This chapter examines the results of my survey with regards to preferred art media and offers program ideas and opportunities for partnerships. Participants were asked to rate a list of subjects to determine which art media would make popular programs. The results are organized by media, from most popular to least popular. The art medium that older adults reported the highest interest in was painting, followed by photography, crafts, drawing, and textile arts. The areas of art that older adults reported the least interest in (in order from most popular to least popular), were video art, computer art, and lastly printmaking.

The general results indicate that art preference may well be influenced by familiarity. Very familiar media, painting and photography scored well, but video art, computer art and prints were rated lower. One can assume that the general public has not had a great deal of exposure to video art; infact during the course of conducting the survey, many people asked me to explain “video art.” Alternatively, it is possible that the expressed preference for painting, photography, and crafts might be caused by the participants’ philosophies and definition of art, rather than a lack of familiarity with the media. It is reasonable to expect that many of the participants do not consider computer graphics to be “Art” in the same way that they consider Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* because many people unfortunately prescribe to a hierarchy of art. Setting all hierarchies and philosophies aside, this preference for painting and photography could also simply be a matter of personal taste.

PAINTING

Painting was the most popular art media. Not surprisingly, it was most highly regarded at the AMOA. It was rated highest by people under 75, those with a post-

secondary school education, and females. Like photography, painting offers many different sub-media from which to choose: watercolor, oil, acrylic, tempera and more. Acrylic paint is a fairly inexpensive and safe media around which to develop an introductory painting class. The LSAC and SASAC both have informal groups that meet to learn about painting. Art educators should combine the strengths of both the senior center programs and the public programs by creating an informal, community-of-learners atmosphere in a convenient location, as the senior centers do, while at the same time increasing the challenge and scope of the curriculum to a higher level.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography was the second-most popular art media. It was more popular with men than women, those under 75, and those with a secondary school education. Photography was most popular at the CGSAC, and least popular at the LSAC. As photography is a fairly technical art, it is not surprising that men rated it more highly than women, as women have expressed less interested in acquiring technical knowledge (Boulton-Lewis, 2003).

The medium of photography offers many different avenues for image creation; Polaroid, digital photography, color film, black and white film, portraits, documentary photography, architectural photography, nature photography, photo-illustration and more. For program flexibility and in order save money in the long-run on processing, art educators wishing to start a photography program for older adults should acquire a set of digital cameras through donation or sponsorship. Professional photographers could lead photography workshops or outings, for example, on an introductory workshop to architectural photography in the field in downtown Austin. Another photographic arts program possibility that was suggested by a study participant is photo-

retouching/restoration classes where participants can bring in old or damaged photographs from their own collections and learn to restore them using the computer.

CRAFTS

Crafts were the third most popular art media after painting and photography. They were most popular with patrons of the AMOA, and were more popular with women than with men, as expected. “Craft” is a problematic term that overlaps with the media of decorative arts, textile arts, and folk arts and carries certain conflicting connotations. It is generally used to refer to creative activities with practical applications like scrapbooking, macramé, and papermaking. Crafts are enjoying a revival among young people and would be a great opportunity for intergenerational projects. The Austin Craft Mafia is an energetic, stylish group of innovative craft artists and entrepreneurs leading the local craft revolution. A partnership with members of this group may be a valuable asset to those wishing to start or expand craft programs.

DRAWING

Drawing was a popular media that received a rank of four out of 12. It was rated most highly by participants at AMOA, as were most art media. It was most popular with women, those under 75, and those with a post-secondary school education. Drawing classes are simple to start and inexpensive to maintain. An informal drawing club can easily be started, where participants choose the subjects they would like to explore and experiment with different media to work with the theme as the instructor guides students in the use of various media and techniques.

TEXTILE ARTS

Textile arts were ranked well, at five out of 12. Textile arts, like most art media, was rated highest by participants at the AMOA and the CGSAC. Women manifested a great interest in textile arts, but men expressed very little.

A variety of choices exist for textile arts program expansion. Quilting programs have been successful at other institutions in the past. The SASAC has a quilting circle in place that could be developed to include lessons in the history of quilting, and the new uses of textile arts in contemporary art. Also, textile art groups could be expanded to serve philanthropic causes, like sewing clothes, toys, and blankets for those in need. Although the results of my particular study did not specifically confirm a strong need to contribute, other research shows that many older adults suffer psychologically from a sense of loss of usefulness. Staying active in the community and making tangible contributions to society is a way to maintain one's sense of worth (Hoffman, 1992). Textile arts could also include programs related to fashion. Older women may enjoy reviewing a history of women's fashions over the last century. An ambitious and also potentially empowering project would be an older women's fashion project. Students could work together to create a fashion line, hold fashion shows and market their designs to area boutiques.

JEWELRY

Jewelry was ranked in the middle at six out of 12. It was most popular at the CGSAC and the AMOA. Women, more than men, were more interested in learning about jewelry. It was more popular with those who had completed their secondary school education rather than those with a post-secondary school education. Jewelry was least popular at the LSAC.

For jewelry arts expansion, I recommend starting with beaded jewelry workshops. Some local bead-shops, like Nomadic Notions, host beading parties, which would be a fun way to build interest in the art. After tackling basic beading techniques, professional jewelry artists could lead instruction on increasingly complicated and technical jewelry-making processes. Although the main objective for creating jewelry programs would be for the enjoyment and education of the students, the products made could potentially be auctioned as fundraisers for charities or other programs as an alternative to the bake sale.

SCULPTURE

Sculpture ranked in the middle, seven out of 12. It was most popular with participants at the AMOA, among those with a post-secondary school education, and people under 75. Women expressed a higher interest in learning about sculpture (as they did for most artforms). Sculpture has not received the same attention as two-dimensional media because in most art courses two-dimensional materials are less expensive, easier to store, and the tools involved are somewhat safer than sculpture and three-dimensional media tools (chisels, hammers, carving sticks, wire, blowtorches, etc.).

Sculpture is an umbrella term for such a wide variety of media that programs could go in many directions, but because the materials and equipment required for sculpture studio courses are so problematic, an “appreciatory” approach, rather than a studio approach, is recommended. A slide-lecture course in the history of sculpture, which includes field-investigation of sculpture in Austin, would be a great way to learn about sculpture and its role in the community.

COLLAGE

Collage was ranked in the middle -- eight out of 12. Women, people under 75, and participants at the CGSAC rated it higher than other groups. Collage is an artform

that is simple in concept but can be used to create incredibly challenging, complex, and compelling compositions. Many people in the general public are familiar with the artform, but fewer are aware of how sophisticated a collage can be. Art programs interested in including collage would benefit from studying the work of artists who have used collage in new ways (Romare Bearden, Barbara Kruger, etc.). Local artists that utilize collage (for example, Lance Letcher) could be recruited to discuss their work, as well.

CERAMICS

Ceramics ranked fourth to last for art media. It was most popular at the AMOA and the CGSAC. Men and members of the LSAC expressed the least interest in learning about ceramics. “Paint-your-own-Pottery” type ceramics programs are already in place at several senior centers around town. These popular programs could be expanded to include pottery creation as well. Partnerships could be established with local ceramics studios (like Clayways), for instruction and kiln usage.

VIDEO ART

Video art was not terrifically popular, as it came in third to last. It was more popular with men and participants at the CGSAC. Many people taking the survey stopped when they reached this question and asked me what video art was, which seems to indicate that few older adults are familiar with this medium. Video art is a somewhat recent development in art and it is not surprising that a limited number of people are aware of it.

I do not anticipate that a great many older adults will want to start making avant-garde video art, but I do believe that many would be curious to know more about it. A wonderful way to introduce this art form would be for video artists to present and explain

their work directly to students in an older adult art program at a senior center or museum. I believe the human interaction and artists' explanations (rather than a curator or docent's interpretations) would be an immediate and direct way for older students to connect with this new artform.

COMPUTER ART

Computer art came in second to last. It was rated highest by participants at the CGSAC. Participants at CGSAC also rated "technology" higher than the other sites, so it is logical that they would rate computer art higher than the other sites as well.

As a tech-industry city, Austin is rich with funding and resources for technical education. A good place for art educators to start expanding computer/digital art programs would be to form a partnership with local digital artists via the Austin Museum of Digital Art (AMODA). Artists could attend older adult art programs to discuss their work and the exciting new genre of digital art. Special field trips could be arranged to attend AMODA events so that students could experience the works in person. AMODA events are lively and usually have a nightclub atmosphere due to the fact that they hire electronic musicians and hold one-night exhibits in bars and clubs downtown. This environment may be attractive to some, but I suspect that older adults will prefer to visit the exhibits early in the evening or afternoon before all the festivities begin, therefore special tours should be considered.

PRINTS AND PRINTMAKING

Printmaking was the least popular art medium. Almost everyone has a print somewhere in their home, and every American with a dollar bill in their wallet carries a print on their person, but fewer people understand the process of printmaking. Prints can be created in a variety of ways, but often the process is complex, tedious, and requires

special equipment as opposed to drawing, which requires only a paper and a pencil. It is possible that participants may have had more interest in printmaking if they had more exposure to the process. Partnerships could be established with local print studios (like Flatbed Press) for demonstrations, tours, and instruction.

OTHER MEDIA

Other programs that participants mentioned in the write-in sections and interviews were dancing programs, theatre-improvisation classes, calligraphy, paper-mache, early Texas art, and local art history.

CONCLUSION

Overall, older adults reported a strong interest in learning about art, especially painting, photography, crafts, drawing, and textile arts. Austin is a city rich with artistic experts and creative resources that can be leveraged to create pioneering programs. Art educators need to expand programs for older adults by utilizing these resources and forming partnerships with local artist groups and studios.

In general, the program suggestions made here do not differ greatly from programs currently in place for the general public. The difference is the perspective from which these programs should be planned and executed: to provide quality programs that meet the specific needs of the older adult population rather than the broad needs of the general public. Older adult program planners must consider the preferences of the older adult expressed in this study and consider special accommodations for mobility, pacing, and the like.

Chapter VI: Preferred Learning Formats

The learning formats that were most popular were not surprisingly field trips and hands-on activities, individual projects, series, and lectures. The least popular learning format was distance learning. Collaborative projects and formally structured projects were also rated poorly. In this chapter, I explain the survey results regarding preferred learning formats, but unlike Chapters IV and V, I do not make specific program suggestions. My results showed slight gender, age, and education level differences, but as previous research suggests individual preferences play the largest role in shaping learning preferences (Truluck & Courtenay, 1999). Although preference did not appear to fall along demographic lines, there were some learning formats that were clearly more popular than others.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips were the most popular learning format, based on total scores. They were most highly rated at the CGSAC, by those under 75, those with a secondary school education, and females. As many older adults face transportation challenges, field trips offer opportunities to visit places that may otherwise be difficult or impossible to reach. Austin and the surrounding area boasts many great destinations for art education, and although field trips can be potentially expensive compared to in-situ programs, they are in high demand and therefore highly recommended.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Hands-on activities were rated highly by all sites and groups and received a ranking of two out of 12, based on total scores. Participants at the CGSAC rated it higher than other sites. Age appeared to correlate to interest in hands-on activities because those under 75 rated it much higher than those over 75. Gender did not appear to relate to

preference for this format as men and women rated it similarly, but previous studies suggest that women prefer more concrete learning activities and men prefer abstract styles (Kolbs, 1985 cited Truluck & Courtenay). Other research confirms that adults prefer hands-on and self-directed activities (Knowles 1980; Sawyer & Fellenz 2001). Truluck and Courtenay (1999) acknowledge that much of the literature surrounding older adult education suggests that older adults prefer hands-on activities, but their study found that as they age, many people become more “reflective and observational” in their learning preferences, meaning that they would rather observe as a spectator than necessarily participate themselves.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Individual projects were rated very highly at three out of 14, based on total score. They were more popular with men, participants at the AMOA, people with a post-secondary school education, and people under 75 years of age. Men and women rated individual projects similarly. Individual projects were not very popular with those people who had completed a secondary school education, and participants at the LSAC. Individual projects will be well received by all groups, but individual projects are in especially high demand at the CGSAC.

SERIES

Multiple short classes (or Series) were a preferred format that received a ranking of four out of 12, based on total scores. It was more popular with people under 75 and was much more popular with women than men. It was more highly regarded at the CGSAC than at other sites. It was also more popular among those with a post-secondary school education than those with a secondary school education. I would recommend

creating programs structured as series to any institution wishing to start a program for older adults.

LECTURES

The classic lecture is an ever-popular way to learn. I had not anticipated that older adults would express such great interest in this most conventional learning format, but results were clear and the success of lecture programs at institutions nationwide illustrates their high effectiveness. Other research by Dohmen (1998) confirms that older adults prefer lectures and open discussions. Lectures were most popular at the AMOA and CGSAC. They were more popular with men than women. This reflects findings by Davenport (1986), which showed that men prefer reflective models such as lectures, reading, and audiotapes, whereas women preferred group discussions. Lectures were one of the few formats in the entire survey that people over 75 years old showed a greater preference for than people younger than 75 years of age. Lecture-based learning is a highly recommended instructional format for all sites and groups, as long as lecturers accommodate older adult audiences and address topics that are meaningful and relevant to this audience.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS

Intergenerational projects received an overall ranking of six out of 14, but when analyzed per variable it was less popular. Other research has found intergenerational projects to be very rewarding and in high demand (LaPorte, 1998). In general, intergenerational projects were in highest demand with participants of the CGSAC and those with a secondary-school education. Women preferred intergenerational projects more than men did, which adheres to expectations of traditional gender roles. With this in

mind, intergenerational projects are recommended especially for women, the AMOA and the CGSAC.

OUTREACH

Outreach programs were most popular with participants under 75 years of age, women, those with a secondary school education, and participants of the CGSAC. Transportation challenges can prevent some learners from participating in education programs at art and educational institutions. Outreach programs are a way to bring the program to the student in their home or community center. Many museums and art institutions already have outreach programs in place that target school age audiences. Similar programs could be developed from the older adult perspective. The Whitney Museum, as part of their senior programs, conducted lectures, project presentations, and studio activities at senior centers that were followed up with visits to the museum itself. Although outreach programs were only rated in the middle, this would be an effective way to gain wider exposure in the community among the older adult audience.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops received a middle ranking of eight out of 14, based on total scores. It was most popular with participants at the AMOA, people under 75, women, and those with a post-secondary school education. It was least popular with the following groups: men, people over 75, and those with a secondary school education. This rating may be because older students prefer to learn topics in deeper detail than one-time workshops allow.

TEACHING-ONESELF

Teaching-oneself was a less-preferred learning format. It was most popular with those among those with a secondary school education, participants at the AMOA,

women, and those under 75 years of age. It is logical that people at the senior centers and museum did not rate “teaching oneself” as a preferred format for the same reasons it is not surprising that distance learning was not more popular. People who choose to attend senior center activities and museums do so because they probably enjoy guided learning activities and learning from experts. If I had conducted a random telephone survey of people in their homes, the results may have been different. For those participants that would like to learn on their own, art educators may plan for them, as well, by making resources available to facilitate self-guided learning. Web sites, handbooks, and take-home activities are simple ways to meet this need.

CLUBS

As senior centers have somewhat of a “club” atmosphere, I had expected clubs to fair well, however clubs were ranked in the bottom tier. They were in highest demand with participants at the CGSAC, those with a post-secondary school education, people under 75, and women. They were least popular with participants at the AMOA, LSAC, and men. As clubs were not in high demand, they are not a recommended format for program expansion.

FORMALLY STRUCTURED PROGRAMS VS. INFORMALLY STRUCTURED PROGRAMS

Survey results for formally structured programs and informal programs were not very conclusive. Neither were rated very well, but informal programs fared better than formally structured programs. Participants in my study rated both categories similarly, which leads me to believe that perhaps the question should have been phrased differently. Both were most popular with participants at the AMOA, people under 75, those with a post-secondary school education, and women. Walker et al. (2004) inquired as to what group size older adults preferred and found that the smaller the group, the more people

enjoyed it. Groups of 2-5 people were most appealing, followed by groups of 5-10 people. Groups of 10-15 people were least desired. As smaller groups are generally more informal than larger groups, this may help explain the fact why informal programs were rated slightly higher.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Collaborative projects were rated second-to-last for preferred learning formats, but its polarity, individual projects, scored in the top three. This indicates that the older adults I surveyed prefer to accomplish tasks on their own. All groups surveyed rated collaborative projects poorly, but those with a secondary school education and participants at the SASAC rated it higher than other groups. The post-modern art education perspective generally encourages collaborative work, but in the case of older adults in Austin I would not advise using this format at this time.

However poorly collaborative projects scored on this survey, this learning format can sometimes be successful. It is worthwhile to point out that the Whitney Museum conducted successful collaborative art projects with an artist in residence that visited local senior centers and worked with residents to create a series called “Collage of Lives.” Although currently, participants stated that they were not very interested in collaborative projects, new collaborative experiences may elevate older adults’ interest in this kind of learning, if the experiences are rewarding and worthwhile.

DISTANCE-LEARNING

With the transportation and mobility issues that many older adults face, I had expected distance-learning to be in higher demand. However, distance-learning was the lowest ranked learning format, based on total scores. This is most likely due to the fact that I interviewed people at senior activity centers and museums instead of people in their

own homes. People that choose to attend education programs participate because they are physically able to do so, and because they enjoy learning with others. If I had conducted a telephone or mail survey of random people in their homes, the results may well have been different.

Of those who did report interest in distance learning, there was a logical relation to age. Distance-learning was one of the few questions that people over 75 years of age rated higher than those under 75 years of age, which can most likely be attributed to the increasing problems of transportation and mobility with advancing years. Women reported a higher interest than men; also people with a secondary school education rated it higher than men. Several participants mentioned that they were avid PBS watchers, so potential partnerships with local PBS station KLRU may be a good way to reach the distance-learning audience.

OTHER FORMATS

In general, research suggests learning style evolves with age. People develop a dominant learning style in their youth and young adulthood, but as they age they begin to use other non-dominant styles as well. Abstract/reflective styles become more popular than concrete/active styles with advancing years (Truluck & Courtenay, 1999). This indicates that lectures and tours would be in higher demand with this audience than hands-on activities, but my results did not reflect this.

CONCLUSION

In general, older adults responded as expected to preferred learning format questions, but there were a few exceptions. There were not any glaring differences in gender preferences, but age does appear to make a difference. Older adults over 75 were less interested than those under 75 in all learning formats except for distance learning.

Location related to preference in the fact that participants at the AMOA and CGSAC were more generous in their ratings than participants from other sites. Participants with differing education levels rated many formats similarly, with several exceptions.

Chapter VII: Preferred Learning Goals

“Actively engaged individuals are more likely to remain mentally and physically stimulated and, as a result, to enjoy a better quality of life” (Administration on Aging, 2000). For this reason, it is important to offer programs that help older adults meet their personal goals for learning so that they will stay actively engaged. This chapter presents the preferred learning goals of older adult participants in museum and senior activity center programs. Like learning formats, learning goals did not appear to be greatly divided by demographic lines, individual factors appear to be more influential. This being said, there were several learning goals that were shared by most groups within the older adults that were surveyed. The most popular learning goal was to spend quality time with a loved one, followed by the desire to grow as a person, make new friends, enjoyment, and to feel connected to others. The least popular goals for participating in education or recreational programs were physical challenge, to learn a new skill, and to share accomplishments with others. This does not necessarily indicate that older adults are not interested in these goals, but only that rewards like quality time and enjoyment are more powerful motivators. My hypothesis that older adults would be most interested in intellectual and physical challenges was not demonstrated in the results, but the hypothesis that psychosocial goals would be desired was amply demonstrated.

Socio-demographic, educational and situational variables predict initial participation in adult learning programs, but learning outcomes are affected by motivational factors, which vary from person to person (Brady & Lamb, 2005). Fischer (as cited by Brady & Lamb, 2005) found that popular goals for participating in learning programs were social interaction, intellectual challenge, being with people, challenge of learning, the desire for useful information, self-actualization, empowerment, and

enjoyment. Brady & Lamb's (2005) review of Lifetime Learning Institute participants found that participants were motivated to participate by the rewards of intellectual stimulation, the comfort of a supportive community, increased self-esteem, and spiritual renewal. Sawyer and Fellenz (2001) characterized four types of museum visitors: "skill seekers, museum geeks, socializers, and knowledge seekers" (p. 21). There are several types of older adult art students: art professionals, novice artists, and spectators (Greenberg, 1987; Hoffman, 1992). According to the results of this survey, participants expressed the greatest interest in social goals.

SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH A LOVED ONE

Depending on how you analyze the data, results differ as to which gender holds a stronger preference for engaging in quality time with others. Based on total scores, women rated quality time to be a more important goal than did men, but based on score averages, men rated it higher than did women. Either way, spending quality time with a loved one was the most popular learning goal overall. People under 75 and those with a secondary school education rated it higher than people over 75 and those with a post-secondary school education, but the same can be said of most learning goals. Quality time was highly rated by all groups.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Personal growth was the second most highly rated learning goal. This reflects findings by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (2005), which also found personal growth to be one of the two most popular reasons for participating in education programs. It was most important to participants at the CGSAC, people under 75 years old, and among those with a secondary school education. Personal growth was more important to men than women. It was least important to participants at the LSAC.

Participants in Brady and Lamb's (2005) study of motivating factors in lifelong learning institute program participation expressed that increased self-esteem was a key benefit to learning. Participants explained that their self-esteem was boosted because they felt smarter, more intellectually competent, and because they had rejected "previously accepted stereotypes of aging which they no longer apply to themselves or others" (Brady & Lamb, 2005, p. 200). For women, the sense of empowerment was especially pronounced because it allowed them to "go beyond the role of family caretaker" (Brady & Lamb, 2005, p. 219). Ardel (2000) highlights the importance of "wisdom-centered programs" that help older adults make meaning of their personal lives and to "place their lives in the larger frame of human culture" rather than intellectual programs that focus on information acquisition (p. 786). Ardel (2000) argues that humanities and "wisdom-centered" programs offer more valuable benefits such as helping students prepare for their own death, answer philosophical/existential questions, and helping them make sense of their past in order to make the present more enjoyable.

MAKE NEW FRIENDS

The goal of making new friends was found to be less appealing to men than it was to women. This reflects previous research that shows that women, more than men, are interested in new social connections (Stiftung, 1991, as cited in Dohmen 1998). Participants at the AMOA rated the goal of making new friends as a less important goal than participants at other sites, while participants at CGSAC rated it higher than others. It was more popular with women, those under 75, and those with a secondary school education. The high regard for the goal of making new friends reflects previous research that determined the high motivational influence of social goals for program participation (Abraham, 1998).

ENJOYMENT

Enjoyment was a popular learning goal that received a ranking of four out of 12. It was most popular with participants at the AMOA, people under 75, and those with a post-secondary school education. Men, more than women, expressed a greater motivation for learning for enjoyment. The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (2005) study found that entertainment was one of the two most popular reasons for participating in education programs.

FEEL CONNECTED TO OTHERS

The learning goal of feeling connected to others was rated in the middle five out of 12. A desire to feel connected to others was expressed greatest by those with a secondary school education, under 75, and female. It was less important to men, those with a post-secondary school education, and people over 75. Social activity is the “principle benefit” of education and recreation programs and helps older adults age more “successfully” (Walker et al., 2004, p. 355). Loneliness is a problem for one quarter of older adults in Texas (Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, 2005).

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE OR STIMULATION

Intellectual challenge was not a great priority for the older adults surveyed in this study because it received a middle ranking of six out of 12. It was most popular with participants at the AMOA, those under 75, and those with a post-secondary school education. Men, more than women, expressed a greater need for intellectual challenge. This may be because of the values that men and women have been socialized to adopt. Intellectual challenge was less popular with those who possessed a secondary school education, and those over 75, which may occur because these two groups possibly suffer from more insecurity regarding their intellectual abilities. Although intellectual challenge

was not rated highly on the survey, participants in the interviews expressed enthusiasm for activities that “keep their minds alert.” Additionally, write-in answers included a request for activities that “increase vocabulary.”

SENSE OF BELONGING

Achieving a sense of belonging was a middle-ranked priority. It was most popular with students at the CGSAC, people under 75, and those with a secondary school education. It was more important to men than to women, which raises questions because women, more than men, expressed a greater interest in social goals, overall. It was less important to participants at the Austin Museum of Art, who generally scored every question generously, but deviated from that pattern when they rated the importance of a sense of belonging lower than participants at other sites. Enjoying a sense of belonging was a found by Brady and Lamb (2005) to be a motivating factor for older adults who participate in education programs. In particular, older adults in the Brady and Lamb study enjoyed eating lunches together and felt that this strengthened their bonds as a unified group.

DEVELOP A PRE-EXISTING SKILL

The goal of developing a pre-existing skill received a lower-middle ranking of eight out of 12. It was more important to participants at the Austin Museum of Art, people under 75, women and those with a post-secondary school education. Although the goal of developing a pre-existing skill was not found to be very important to participants in this study, it is still a motivating factor for some. Brady and Lamb (2005) found that pursuing earlier interests was cited as a learning goal for participants in Lifetime Learning Institutes.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

Contributing to the Community was a lower priority learning goal that received a ranking of nine out of 12. It was most popular with people under 75, participants at the CGSAC, people with a post-secondary school education, and women. It was least popular with people over 75 and participants at the SASAC. These results conflict with existing research, which states that older adults highly value community contribution and a need to feel that they are still useful (Hooyman & Kuyak, 2005; Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, 2005). This most likely means that contributing to the community is an important value for many older adults, but not the *most* important. The fact that older adults in Texas care very much about their communities is evidenced by the 60% of older adults who reported they currently work as a volunteer or have done so in the past (Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, 2005). Although it was not highly rated in the survey, participants in the interviews and write-ins answers voiced a strong interest in contributing to their communities through volunteer work and helping others through “daily acts of kindness.”

SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH OTHERS

“Sharing accomplishments with others” was the third to last learning goal evidenced by the survey respondents. It was most important to those with a secondary school education and those under 75. It was more important to men than women, which may be because men are often socialized to be more competitive than women. It was more popular at the SASAC than at other sites. Another related but slightly different nuance of this goal is sharing knowledge and skills, which was found to be an important learning goal for older adults (Brady & Lamb, 2005). By the same token, Chene and Sigouin (1997) found reciprocity between teachers and students to be an important characteristic of older adult education programs.

LEARN A NEW SKILL/INFORMATION

Overall, participants in this study reported little interest in learning a new skill, as it received a second-to-last ranking. Learning a new skill was the most popular goal with participants at the AMOA, people under 75, people with a post-secondary school education, and females. It was less popular with men and participants at the LSAC.

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE OR STIMULATION

Physical challenge was the least popular learning goal. It was more popular with men, those with a secondary school education, and people under 75. It is possible that the term physical challenge may be associated, in the participant's mind, with physical exertion, rather than light challenge or stimulation, as I had intended. Walker et al. (2004) found that senior center participants under 70 years old were more interested in physical exercise programs, than were those over 70 years old. The topic "fitness and health" however, was one of the most popular learning topics identified, so it would seem that members of this audience are interested in learning about health, but are not looking for avenues for physical challenge through education programs.

OTHER GOALS

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (2005) found that "having new experiences" was "very important" to 60% of older adults. Write-in answers on the survey included "get together with friends," and "helping people that really need it." Interview responses highlighted the importance of helping others, opportunities to socialize and maintain an active mind. Subjects also requested programs that engage mental stimulation and foster activism in the community.

CONCLUSION

Art programs for older adults should incorporate the most popular learning goals in order to offer rewarding experiences. Most importantly, programs should present opportunities for socialization and personal growth. These ideas, as well as conclusions drawn from the other three categories addressed in this study-- preferred areas of study, preferred art media, and preferred learning formats -- are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

Overall, I found that older adults in Austin are interested in learning about art and the humanities and would like to remain active through continuing education. These results indicate some divisions along demographic lines, especially by gender and age, but the largest differences appear to be centered on the individual, which reflects the findings of earlier research (Truluck & Courtenay, 1999). As previously stated, the participant pool of this study consisted primarily of women under 75 years of age with a post-secondary school education, who according to previous research, are the most likely group to participate in recreation and education programs for older adults (Sawyer & Fellenz, 2001). In my research, I also found that this group, on average, reported the greatest interest in learning, even after accounting for the bias of the participant pool. Men reported less interest, which reflects previous findings by Dohmen (1998) that men are less interested in learning after retirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATORS

This study was conducted to help local educators better understand the preferences of the population so that these educators and their institutions can create more effective programs. In the following section, I discuss ways that program development may occur, based on the survey results as well as best practices drawn from pertinent literature and research.

A Program Development Formula Based, on Survey Results

Throughout this report, I have made initial program suggestions for each learning topic and art media. In order to further develop quality programs the following formula has been developed: Use the top 5 selections from each of the four categories (learning

subject, art media, format & goal) and combine them as a springboard to create programs that may likely be well received by older adult audiences. Utilizing this strategy, there are 625 possible combinations available to inspire educators as they brainstorm art education program ideas for older adults.

The following is a description of the program development formula.

The Formula

Area of study + Art media + Learning format + Learning goal = Program idea

Top Five from Each Category

- Areas of study: history, nature, places and cultures, religion and spirituality, fitness and health.
- Art media: painting, photography, crafts, drawing, and textile arts.
- Learning formats: field trips, hands-on activities, individual projects, short series, and lectures.
- Learning goals: quality time with a loved one, personal growth, making new friends, enjoyment, and social connection.

Examples

To create new art education programs, educators should look at their resources through the lens of the popular learning topics and choose a popular media. Next the program planner should structure the program using one of the most popular learning formats and build in the most popular goals. Several examples of program suggestions devised using the formula are as follows: “Drawing the 20th Century,” “Weaving the World” and “Photographing Zilker Park.”

By utilizing the popular topic of History, the medium of drawing, the learning format of a short series, and the learning goal of spending quality time with a loved one, a

potentially successful workshop could be created, such as “Drawing the 20th Century.” For example, this could be a 10 session Intergenerational workshop where students discuss the events of one decade per session. Youth and older adults would work together to make meaning of the 20th Century through drawing.

By utilizing the popular topic of “places and cultures,” the highly ranked media of crafts, the format of “hands-on” activities, and the learning goal of social connection, an instructional class called “Weaving the World” could be provided for older adults in Austin. Based on survey responses, this class could be an overview of weaving techniques across cultures. Students would investigate cultural resources and values to examine how these factors shape the material culture associated with weaving. Hands-on instruction in various techniques will foster understanding and a discussion-centered approach will encourage social connection.

“Photographing Zilker Park” combines the popular topic of nature, the media of photography, the format of a field trip, and the goal of enjoyment. This program would be a field trip (or series of field trips) to Zilker Park for a lesson in the basics of nature photography, which introduces local flora and fauna as well.

Best Practices for Older Adult Programming

Creating an ideal program for older adults is difficult because of the wide spectrum of needs held by this audience. However, there appear to be some basic principles of success that apply to all senior programs. The ideal art education program for older adults offers a diverse array of activities in a welcoming, entertaining, stimulating manner that allows for social inclusion, individual contribution, and creative growth of all participants. Creating a successful program depends upon sound planning, well-trained instructors, and engaging activities. Luckie (1999) describes four variables for success of older adult learner programs: strong leadership, stable funding, institutional

support and prominent placement within the institution. The ideal program offers easy transportation, clear, effective advertising, inexpensive but rewarding activities, a variety of levels of challenge, ample breaks and creature comforts, opportunities to socialize, and unique art experiences. From the information gathered in this study, I have outlined the “what” “how” and “why” for initiating quality art education programs for older adults.

What

Education programs must offer a variety of stimulating, engaging content that is relevant to the older learner. Dohmen (1998) asserts that older adults are most interested in learning information and skills that are relevant now, not in the future. Therefore, learning content and aids should directly relate to real life, practical situations and the interests and needs of the student. Dohmen (1998) recommends programming having to do with issues such as caregiving, romance, independence, and gardening where “practical advice is woven into art knowledge or ‘found/demonstrated’ through art” (p. 7). The practice of using art to teach other topics is complex and somewhat controversial, but in the case of older adult art education, this may be an excellent way to meet the student’s needs beyond art learning. It is most beneficial for older adults if programs are designed to provide opportunities that are challenging, but also offer the participants a likely chance for success are best (Hoffman, 1992).

As for learning topics, according to the results of this study older adult participants in area senior recreation centers and museums are very interested in history, nature, places & cultures, religion/spirituality, and health/fitness. In regards to art media, they are most interested in learning about painting, photography, crafts, drawing and textile arts. Walker et al. (2004) asked senior center program participants what kinds of programs they would like to attend. Some of the cultural arts activities requested were (in no particular order): crafts, crocheting, sewing, quilting, music programs, line-dancing

lessons, dances, senior choir, outside entertainment (schoolchildren), oil painting, creative writing, book clubs, and out-of-town trips (theatre/plays).

From my research, it has been determined that older adult participants in local senior recreation centers and museums enjoy lectures, field trips, hand-on activities, individual projects and intergenerational projects. Dohmen (1998) states that older adults prefer open discussions and lectures that allow for “non-committal listening” and “self-determined learning.” Sawyer and Fellenz (2001) found that older adults preferred hands-on activities. As for when to hold programs, early morning and afternoon hours during the workweek are best (Hoffman, 1975 as cited in Hoffman 1977).

As the older adult audience is very diverse, a variety of programming is necessary to suit all preferences of topics, formats, and goals. In addition, variety is especially important to accommodate the wide range of prior knowledge older adults possess. Hoffman (1992) outlined three types of art education students: art professionals or near professionals, novice artists and spectators. As for the depth of programming available, people usually seek beginning level programs (Greenberg 1987), but there are others who seek deeper knowledge. In order for program content to be useful and relevant for the student, it must begin at the education level of the participant. One way that program coordinators can solve this problem is to give clear, detailed course descriptions that indicate to prospective students the depth of the content as well any pre-requisite knowledge that students may find helpful, so students can choose programs most aligned with their level of skill and knowledge. Using specific objectives when marketing programs allows participants to choose programs that suit their goals (Riley & Stanley, 2001). Educators can also offer recommended readings, practice activities, or other resources for students to “prime” themselves or “brush up” before a program starts. Depending on the formality of the program, brief diagnostics or a simple show-of-hands

can also help the educator gauge the education level of the audience in order to effectively choose an appropriate starting place. Programs should grow from present concerns and “build on previous experience” (Hoffman, 1992, p. 85).

Why

Older adult programs meet institutional, personal and societal needs. General program objectives for each institution will vary, but in large the idea is to foster understanding and participation in the arts. In many institutions, the objective of the program may also be to increase traffic in order to build museum revenue. Hoffman (1992) implores art educators to increase knowledge of the arts by broadening artistic horizons and building deeper understanding. For studio classes, the objective should be to increase skill and to challenge individuals to more “complex artistic endeavor[s]” (Hoffman, 1992 p. 86). When setting goals for your program, Hoffman (1992) reminds art educators of the importance of choosing objectives that can be measured and evaluated. It is also important to consider the role of this new program in your institution as a whole, and in the larger arts/education community (Hoffman, 1992).

The students’ personal goals must also be considered and activities should be designed to help students meet these goals. Specific personal goals vary. Through this survey, I found that older adults were most interested in spending quality time with loved ones, enjoyment, staying socially active, and gaining personal growth. Although the need for reminiscing was not measured in this survey, gerontologists and psychologists have established that older adults engage in reminiscing activities as a way to make meaning of one’s life. Opportunities to relate information to the student’s past are often very effective ways to communicate ideas and stimulate conversation. Arts and humanities programs offer unique opportunities for life review and in this way are particularly worthwhile pursuits for older adults (Ardelt, 2000).

In my interviews with older adult art program managers, they reported that the most attractive aspect of their programs that older adult enjoyed most was the social element. Participants relish the opportunity to make friends and develop contacts. Social interaction is important because many older adults' social circles tend to shrink with age. Sawyer and Fellenz (2001) states: "Interaction with the instructor or other program participants is often cited as an important or memorable aspect of program participation" (p. 19). Whatever format is used, group size should be kept to a minimum of less than 15, whenever possible (Walker et al. 2004), either by offering programs at multiple times or breaking the number of program participants into smaller groups.

Beyond "social interaction," older adults seek opportunities to collaborate and contribute. It is important that students and educators share in the responsibilities of planning and running educational programs: "Allow each participant to use talents and interest for the benefits of the group," as in a community of learners (Hoffman, 1992, p. 82). Steering committees are a great way for institutions and the students to share authority.

Evaluation responsibilities should also be shared. "Allow for both teacher-centered & self evaluation" (Anderson, 1965, as cited in Hoffman, 1992). Also, "evaluation should provide for additional exploration & redefinition of goals" (Hoffman, 1992, p. 86). Otherwise, the same rules for effective program evaluation apply to older adult programs, the only difference is that older adults hold a high concern for autonomy and thus it is more important and more appropriate to share power than it may be with younger audiences.

How

Sound planning, good leadership, quality instruction, and appropriate learning formats are necessary for success. Proper instruction means recruiting and training

qualified instructors and forming partnerships with local arts organizations and older adult advocacy groups. Instructors should be experts in their field, but they should also be clear communicators who are aware of older adult needs. (Hoffman, 1992). Other factors for a successful program include adequate, reliable funding, institutional support and placement within the institution (Luckie, 1999). DuJilio and Leinback (1992) state that when relating to older adults, the “attitudinal starting point” to have is to “treat them as adults first” (p. 16). This may seem obvious, but some people make the unfortunate mistake of patronizing older adults and associating physical disability with mental disability (Beatty & Wolf, 1996). In regards to the pacing of activities and delivery of information, there is no evidence of any decline in learning ability with age, but there are changes to short-term memory and the preferred pace of learning (Hooyman & Kooyak, 2005).

Although many older adults do not have mobility or impairment issues, some do have physical and mental limitations and program planners should plan accordingly. Instructors should be sure to speak clearly and use multiple modalities for communicating information. When planning a tour or event for a group of nursing home residents, it is acceptable to politely inquire as to the “general physical and mental condition of the group” (DuJilio & Leinbach, 1992), and if any special accommodations can be offered. Tour planners can then plan the tours so that visitor disabilities are downplayed, and the need for mobility is de-emphasized. Tour planners should also find out specific details for transportation and escorts as well as how many medical staff will be on hand.

Transportation is a major factor affecting participation (Walker et al., 2004). Twenty-three percent of older Texans do not drive (Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, 2005). Program planners must ensure that numerous modes of transportation are available. In addition to buses and ample parking, program planners

should consider taxi services and creating “ride-share” programs. Partnerships with local churches could potentially help ease transportation problems by offering van services or volunteer drivers (Walker et al., 2004). Participants in this study indicated that transportation and convenience issues are very important to them and that transportation, above all, must be convenient in order for them to attend.

Even with adequate transportation, participants will not attend a program if they do not know about it. Twenty-nine percent of older adults in Texas reported that their reason for non-participation in education programs was ignorance about what programs were available. Seniors obtain a majority of information through “word-of mouth,” and the best way to create a base of knowledge is through effective advertising (Menchin, 1991). The most effective mass media outlet through which to reach older adults is television (Menchin, 1991), but non-profit education programs are not likely to have the budget for television advertising campaigns. However, press releases to local news shows (e.g., News 8 Austin’s *Community* segment) would be a good way to receive free airtime. Radio, as a whole, is more popular with younger people, but targeted radio programs and stations would be a productive way to reach this population (Menchin, 1991). Locally, Austin has two publications that target older adults, *Senior News* and *Senior Advocate*. Distributing brochures in recreation facilities and senior resource centers, like Austin Groups for the Elderly, and hosting demonstrations and free lectures in areas that seniors congregate would also be effective ways of distributing program information.

Menchin (1991) offers advice on how to create effective advertising campaigns marketed to seniors. Ads should be created to attract people 10-15 years younger than the actual age of the target demographic because older adults will respond to ads portraying their perceived age as younger than their actual chronological age. Older adults are skeptical of exaggerated claims and also desire more information before making

purchasing decisions, therefore ads should be clear, straightforward, and offer information about products and services in detail. Menchin (1991) suggests that labeling a product or service as age-specific may be a turn-off to older consumers and thus should be avoided. Instead, offering services that older adults desire and stressing the quality of that service is a more effective way to market products and services to older adults. Menchin (1991) also advises that using large type in print ads, offering a telephone number for additional information, and hiring older celebrities as spokespersons are effective practices.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research inspired several other questions that should be investigated:

1. What are the learning preferences of older adult participants of art programs in community college and university programs?
2. What are the learning preferences of nursing home and assisted living residents?
3. What are the learning preferences of Spanish-speaking older adults?
4. What are the learning preferences of older adults who do not participate in senior center or museum programs?
5. What are the learning preferences of cognitively impaired older adults?
6. What are older adults attitudes toward learning?
7. What are older adults attitudes towards art?
8. What advice do experienced older adult educators have regarding best practices in older adult education?
9. Can deliberately designed aesthetic experiences help older adults maintain sensory sensitivity? If so, what are the implications for art education?

10. In which environments would older adults prefer to learn about art, museums or community centers?

CONCLUSION

One day I complained to my grandfather that I was bored and he replied: ‘Well, I’m never bored! There’s always something new to learn everyday.’ My grandparents are my personal role models for active aging, but other public models of lifelong learning and aging and creativity (Marc Chagall, Picasso, Grandma Moses, and local Austin legend Elizabet Ney, to name a few) illustrate the great opportunities that arrive with age, and the many ways in which older adults can make valuable contributions to their culture and communities.

The physical, emotional, social, and psychological rewards of aging actively through educational, creative, and community activities are many, while the costs are few. Art educators have the opportunity to impact the lives of their neighbors in a positive way, and therefore have a moral imperative to act. The greater opportunities for older adult art programming will benefit not only the individual older adults who participate, but the community at large will benefit from the many cultural and historical contributions of creatively active older adults.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Arts Program Preference Questionnaires

I. Personal Interest
Please rate the following statements for how well they describe your interests.

	Very True	True	Somewhat True	Not True at All
I enjoy learning about History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Art History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Film & Movies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about different Places and Cultures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Fitness and Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Religion and Spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to write-in any other learning interests you have if they were not mentioned above:

II. Preferred Art Media

Please rate your interest level in the following types of art media. Please indicate your interest level in learning how to make /appreciate these different types of art, if the opportunity were available.

	Very True	True	Somewhat True	Not True at All
I enjoy learning about and looking at Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about and looking at Video Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about and looking at Painting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Prints & Print-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Textile Arts (sewing, quilting, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about the art of Jewelry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Computer Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy learning about Collage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to write-in any other artforms you would like to learn about if they weren't mentioned:

III. *Format Preference*

Please rate your preference for the following learning situations:

	Very True	True	Somewhat True	Not True at All
I enjoy Collaborative classroom projects where everyone works together to accomplish a task.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Individual projects where I work on my own to learn or accomplish a task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Intergenerational projects where older people and young people (like grandparent & grandchild) work together to accomplish a task.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Lecture-based learning where an expert speaks to a group.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Hands-on learning activities that allow me to explore and apply my knowledge directly (like watching a demonstration, then trying it for myself)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy a series of Multiple Short Classes on one topic spread out over a period of time, (for example, a series of lessons where each successive class builds on what was learned previously)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy short, one-time Workshops that focus on a single topic (for example, a one-day tutorial in painting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. Format Preference continued

	Very True	True	Somewhat True	Not True at All
I enjoy Distance-learning activities that allow me to learn from home through the radio, television, or computer.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Field-trips to educational institutions or "places of interest" (like a museum, or the State Capitol)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Outreach programs that bring the "place of interest" to me (like a slide lecture or a virtual tour of the Capitol)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Formal, Structured learning situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Informal, Less Structured learning situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy Learning on my own and Teaching myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy belonging to Clubs (recreational, or social clubs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. Learning Goals

Many people have different reasons for participating in leisure learning activities. Out of the learning goals listed, please rate how important each goal is to you on a scale of 1 to 4. (1= very important, 4= not important at all)

Very Important Somewhat Important Not Important At All

Learning Goals:

	1	2	3	4
Learn a new skill/topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a pre-existing skill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intellectual Challenge or Stimulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Challenge or Stimulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feel Connected with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share accomplishments with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feel that I belong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To grow as a person & feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make new friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend quality time with a loved one.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribute to the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to write-in any other goals that are important to you if they weren't mentioned:

Basic Demographic Information:

Age Range:

65-70 71-75 76-80 81-85 86-90 91-95 96-100

Gender: Female Male

Highest Level of Education: High School College Post-Graduate Other _____

Occupation/Previous Occupation: _____

I am conducting **optional** brief follow-up interviews to help me fill out my data. If you have 5 more minutes, I would like to know more about your learning interests.

Thank you for participating in the study! It is a great help to my education and to the expansion of arts programming for older adults in Austin!

Appendix B: Survey Consent Form

Survey of Visual Art Learning Preferences in Older Adult Participants of Leisure Learning Programs

Conducted By: Suzanne Philley Moore , suzphilley@hotmail.com, 512-326-1916
UT Faculty Sponsor: Paul Bolin, Department of Art & Art History, 512-471-7757

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. Your participation in the survey and interview means you consent. You may keep this form for your records.

The purpose of this study: To determine the visual art learning preferences of older adults so that local art institutions can better serve this community.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Complete the questionnaire & conduct an optional interview which will be audio recorded.

Total estimated time to participate: 20 minutes for the questionnaire, and 5 minutes for the optional interview.

Risks and benefits of being in the study: There are no known risks of being in this study. There are no individual benefits for being in this study. However, your opinions will help me determine ways that art institutions can create quality programs for older adults.

Compensation: free museum passes.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections: The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Audio recordings will be coded so that no personally identifying information is on them. They will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator, and they will be erased after they are transcribed.

Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board, and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review the research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject.

Contacts and Questions: If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are on the front of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Lisa Leiden, Ph.D., Chair of The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

This page is yours to keep for your records.

Appendix C: Data Tables

TABLE 1. PREFERRED AREAS OF STUDY

“I enjoy learning about...”

	Very True (3 points)	True (2 points)	Somewhat True (1 point)	Not at All (0 points)	Total Score	Response Average
History	47	34	21	4	230	2.17
Art History	27	30	33	15	174	1.66
Film & Movies	22	35	34	15	170	1.60
Literature	33	35	24	14	193	1.82
Nature	43	38	14	11	219	2.07
Technology	26	24	30	24	156	1.50
Cooking	37	28	18	22	185	1.76
Places & cultures	55	38	7	5	248	2.36
Sports	25	22	31	27	150	1.43
Fitness & health	32	43	25	6	207	1.95
Music	34	36	26	9	200	1.90
Religion & spirituality	48	23	19	14	209	2.01

TABLE 2. PREFERRED ART MEDIA

“I enjoy learning about and looking at...”

	Very True (3 points)	True (2 points)	Somewhat True (1 point)	Not at All (0 points)	Total Score	Response Average
Photography	28	33	29	15	179	1.70
Video art	12	21	37	27	115	1.19
Painting	40	34	19	12	207	1.97
Drawing	30	24	27	23	165	1.59
Ceramics	14	23	28	39	116	1.12
Prints & printmaking	13	17	29	46	102	0.97
Textile arts	31	15	21	38	144	1.37
Jewelry	19	25	33	28	140	1.33
Sculpture	18	25	29	32	133	1.28
Crafts	30	30	20	25	170	1.62
Computer art	16	15	34	39	112	1.08
Collage	14	27	26	38	122	1.16

TABLE 3. PREFERRED LEARNING FORMATS

“I enjoy...”

	Very True (3 points)	True (2 points)	Somewhat True (1 point)	Not at All (0 points)	Total Score	Response Average
Collaborative projects	21	25	38	22	151	1.42
Individual projects	44	29	25	8	215	2.03
Intergenerational projects	29	34	27	15	182	1.73
Lectures	27	44	22	12	191	1.82
Hands-on	47	33	18	7	225	2.14
Multiple short classes	33	39	20	14	197	1.86
Workshops	32	31	20	23	178	1.68
Distance Learning	18	25	34	29	138	1.30
Field-trips	44	42	11	9	227	2.14
Outreach	29	32	29	15	180	1.71
Formally structured programs	23	27	37	18	160	1.52
Informally structured programs	22	40	28	13	174	1.69
Teaching oneself	27	26	36	16	169	1.61
Clubs	24	31	34	16	168	2.17

TABLE 4. PREFERRED LEARNING GOALS

	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at all	Score	Response Average
Learn a new skill	34	31	29	8	193	1.89
Develop a pre-existing skill	33	40	20	10	199	1.93
Enjoyment	49	31	12	9	221	2.19
Intellectual challenge	37	40	14	11	205	2.01
Physical challenge	19	33	35	16	158	1.53
Feel connected to others	37	41	15	10	208	2.02
Share accomplishment	30	40	23	10	193	1.87
Feel that I belong	38	36	18	9	204	2.02
To grow as a person	50	35	12	6	232	2.25
Make new friends	44	42	15	2	231	2.24
Spend quality time with a loved one	62	26	8	7	246	2.39
Contribute to the community	35	36	17	10	194	1.98

Appendix D: Survey Result Charts For Preferred Area of Study

ALL SITES

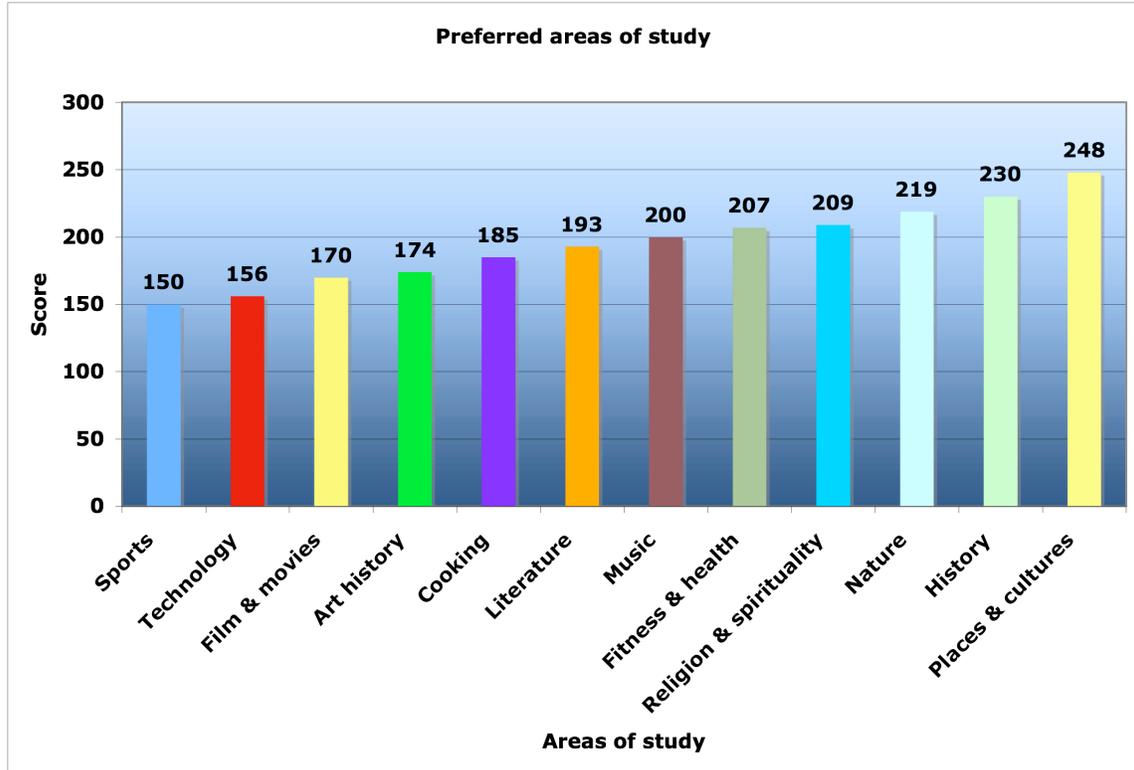


Figure 1. Preferred areas of study results for all sites, based on total scores.

PLACES AND CULTURES

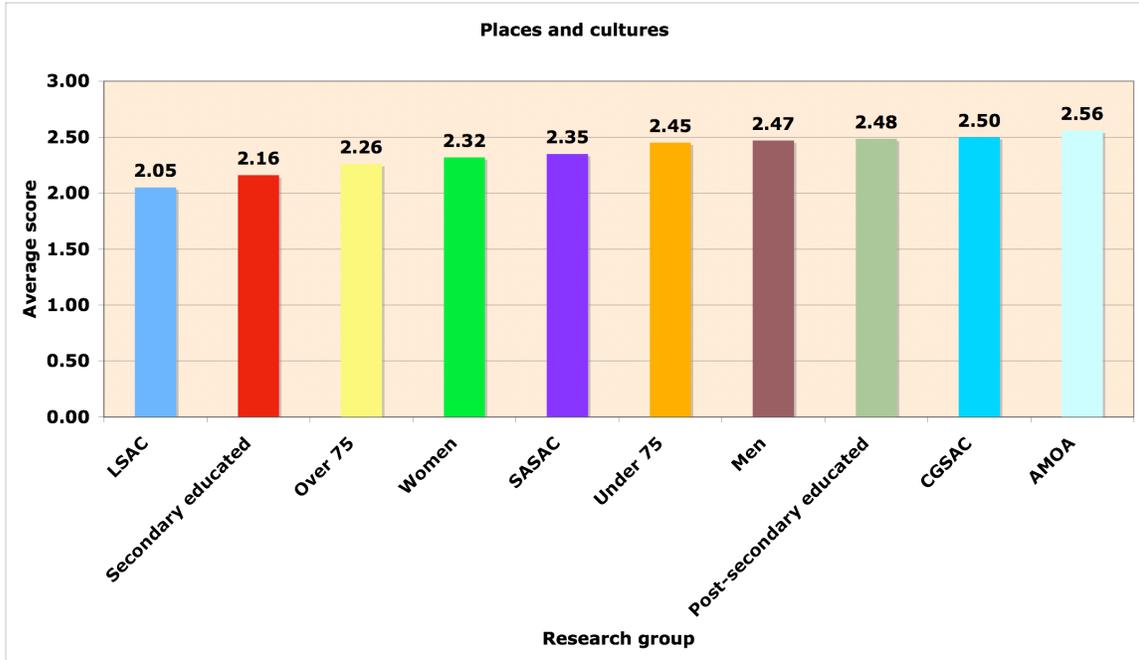


Figure 2. Popularity of the learning topic of places and cultures, based on average scores.

HISTORY

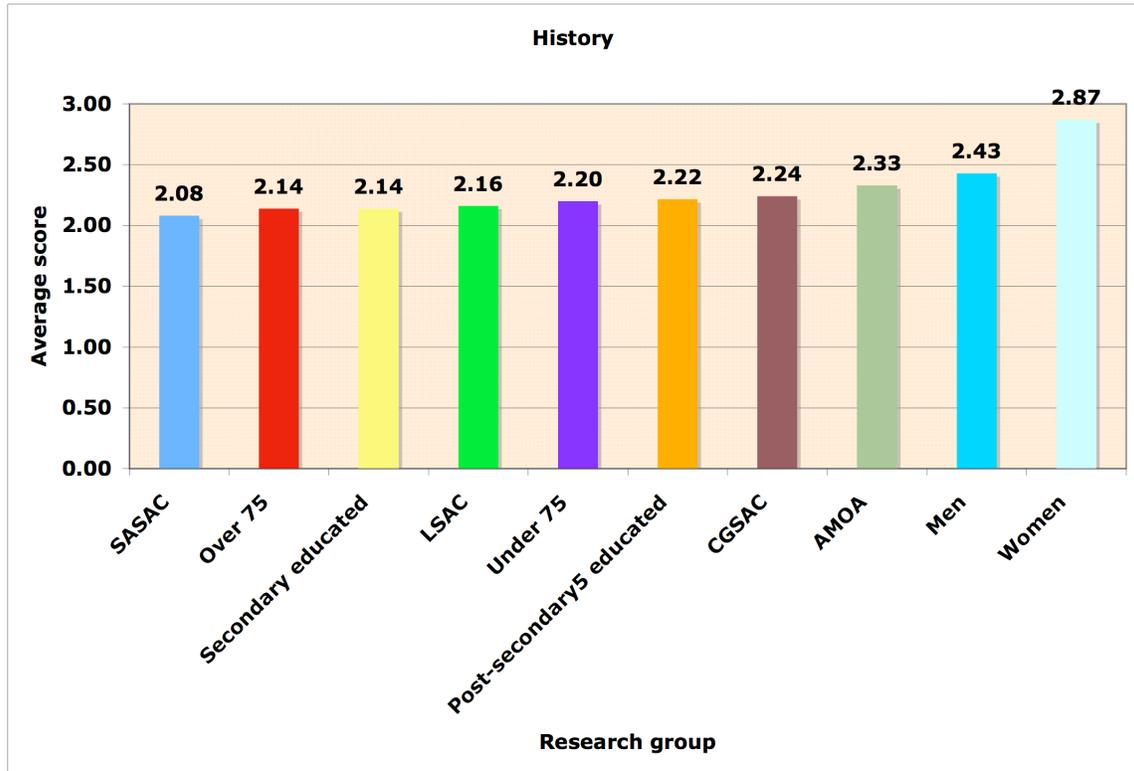


Figure 3. Popularity of the learning topic of history, based on average scores.

NATURE

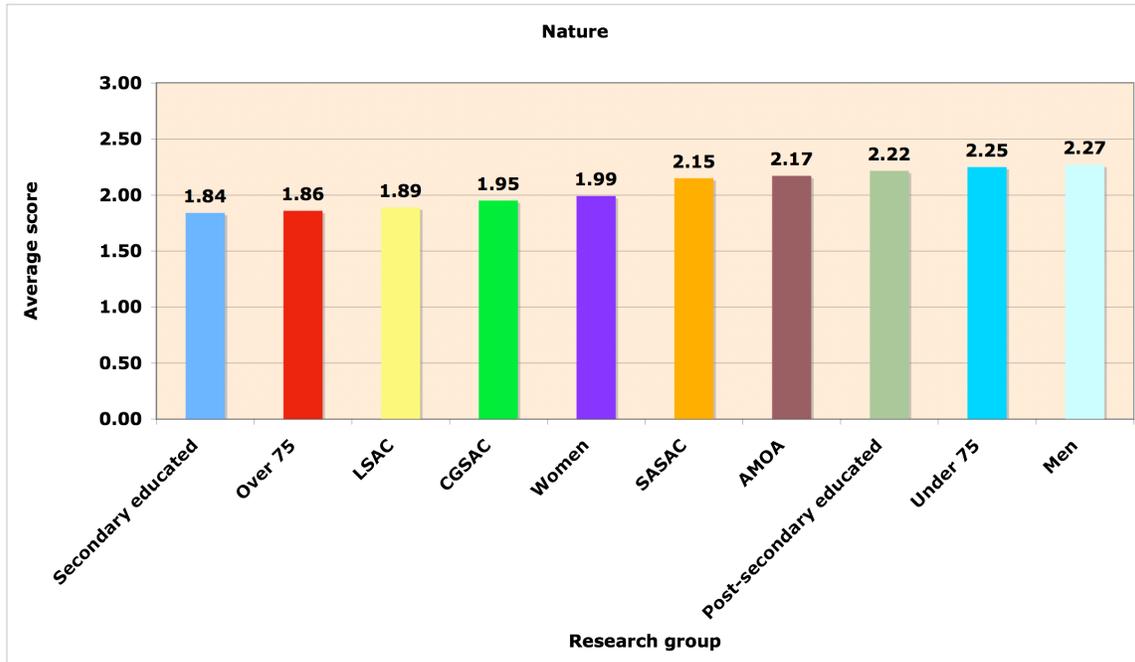


Figure 4. Popularity of the learning topic of nature, based on average scores.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

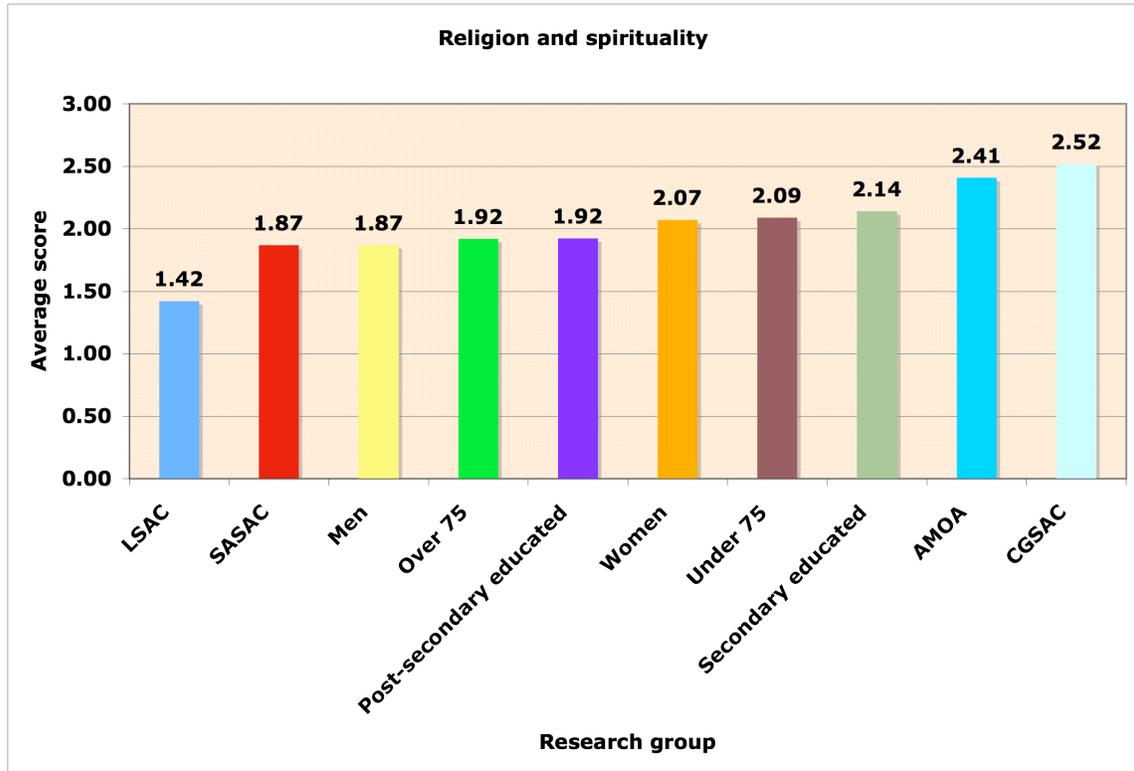


Figure 5. Popularity of the learning topic of religion and spirituality, based on average scores.

FITNESS AND HEALTH

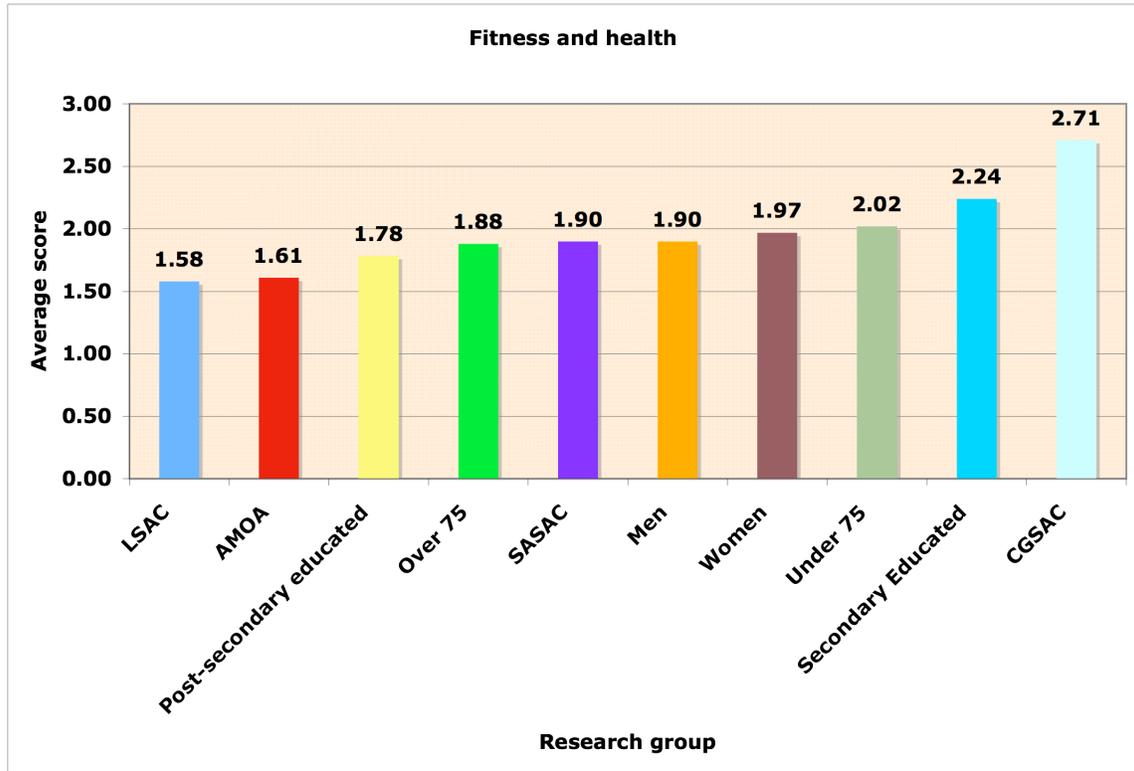


Figure 6. Popularity of the learning topic of fitness and health, based on average scores.

MUSIC

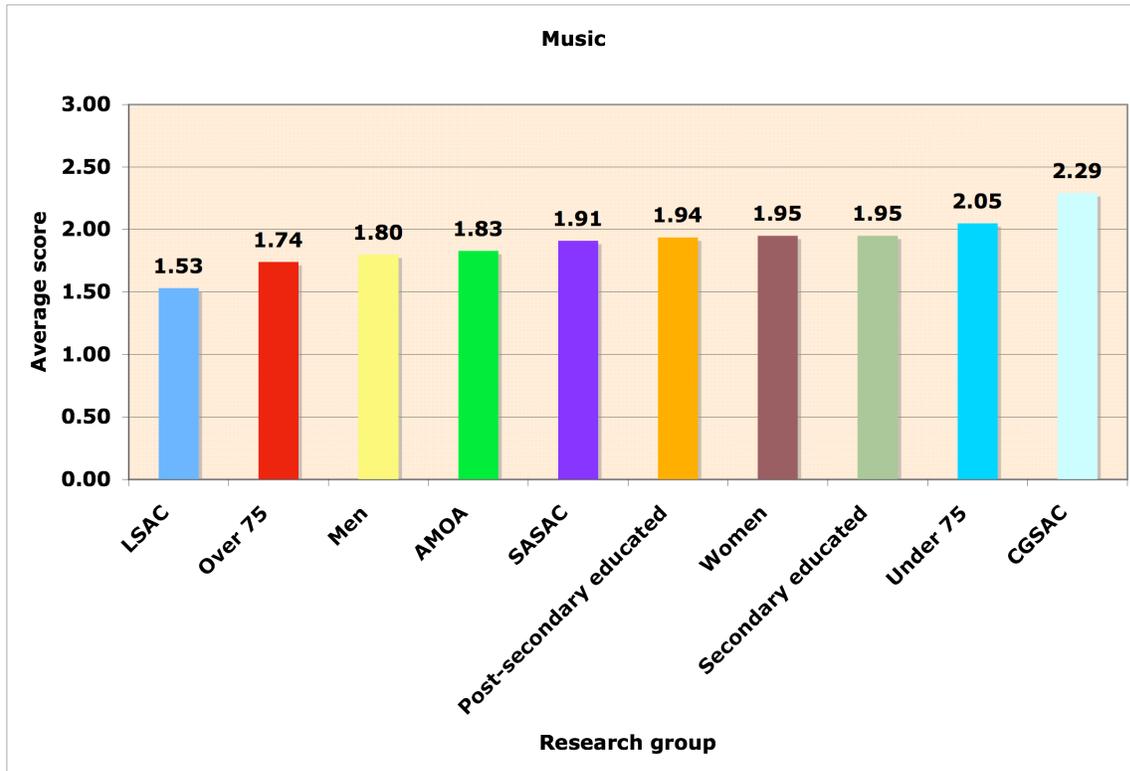


Figure 7. Popularity of the learning topic of music, based on average scores.

LITERATURE

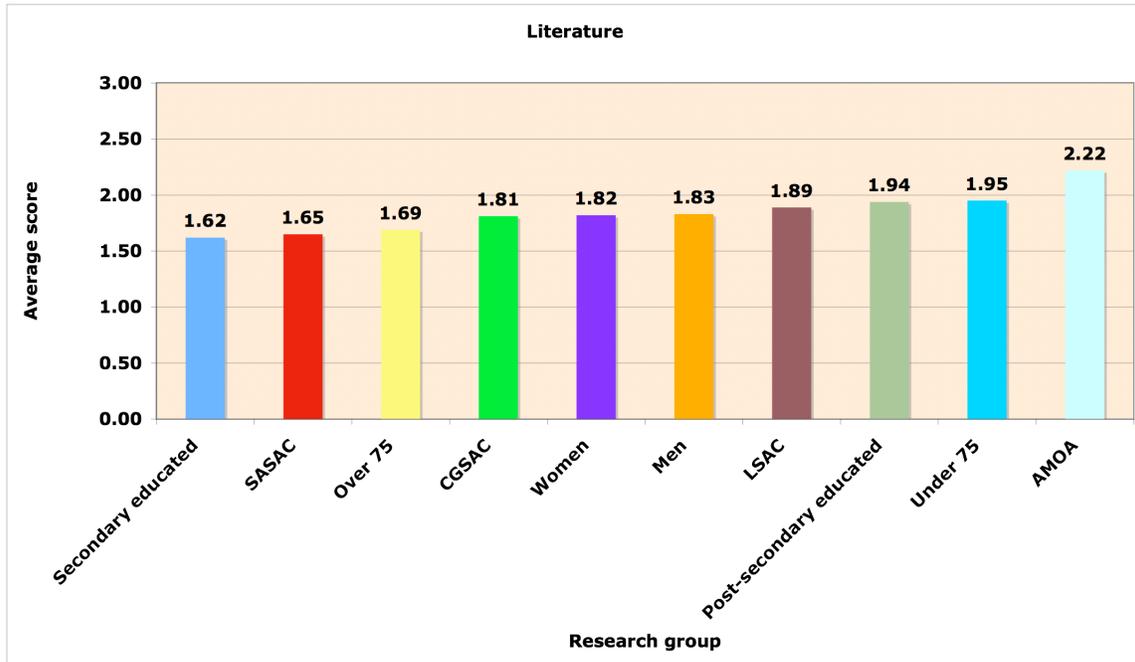


Figure 8. Popularity of the learning topic of literature, based on average scores.

COOKING

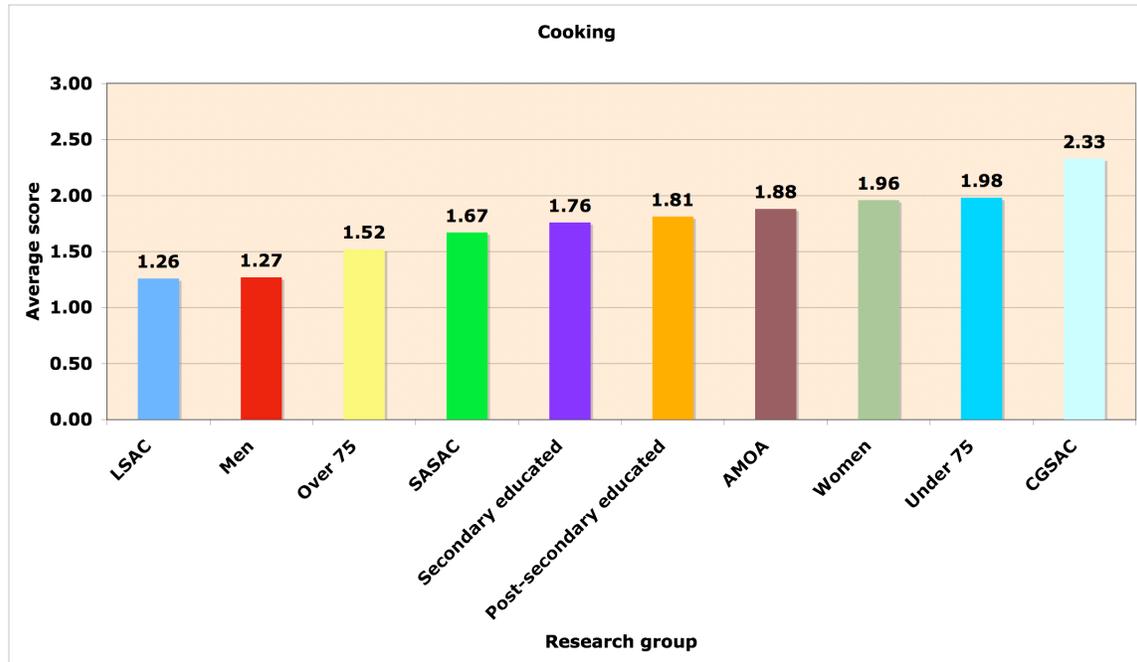


Figure 9. Popularity of the learning topic of cooking, based on average scores.

ART HISTORY

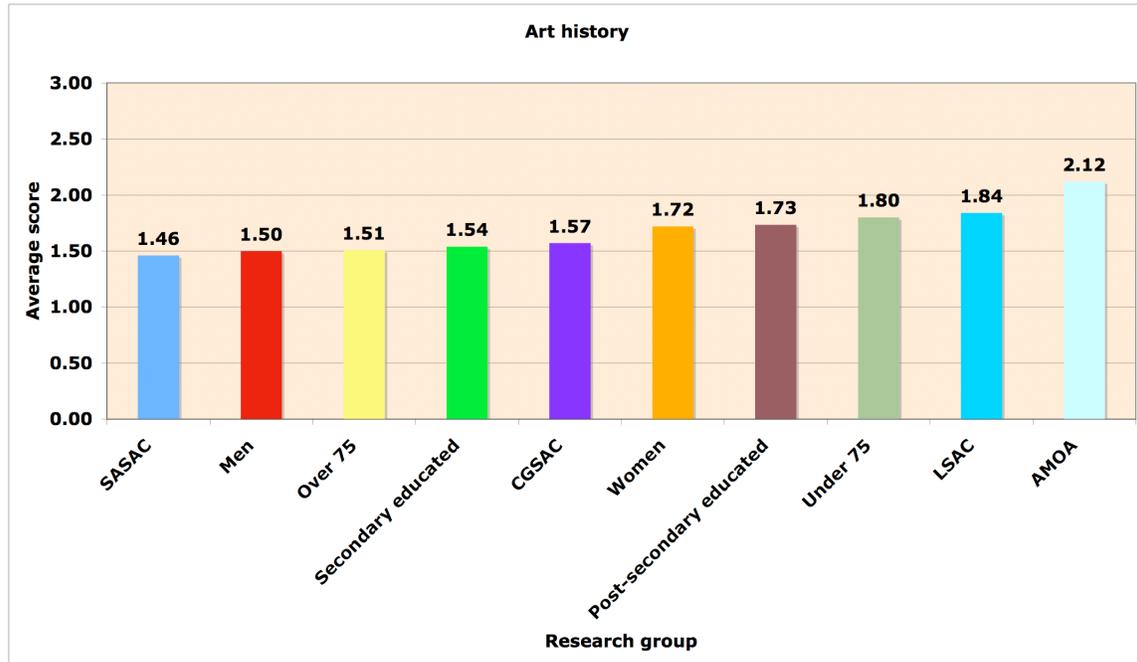


Figure 10. Popularity of the learning topic of art history, based on average scores.

FILM AND MOVIES

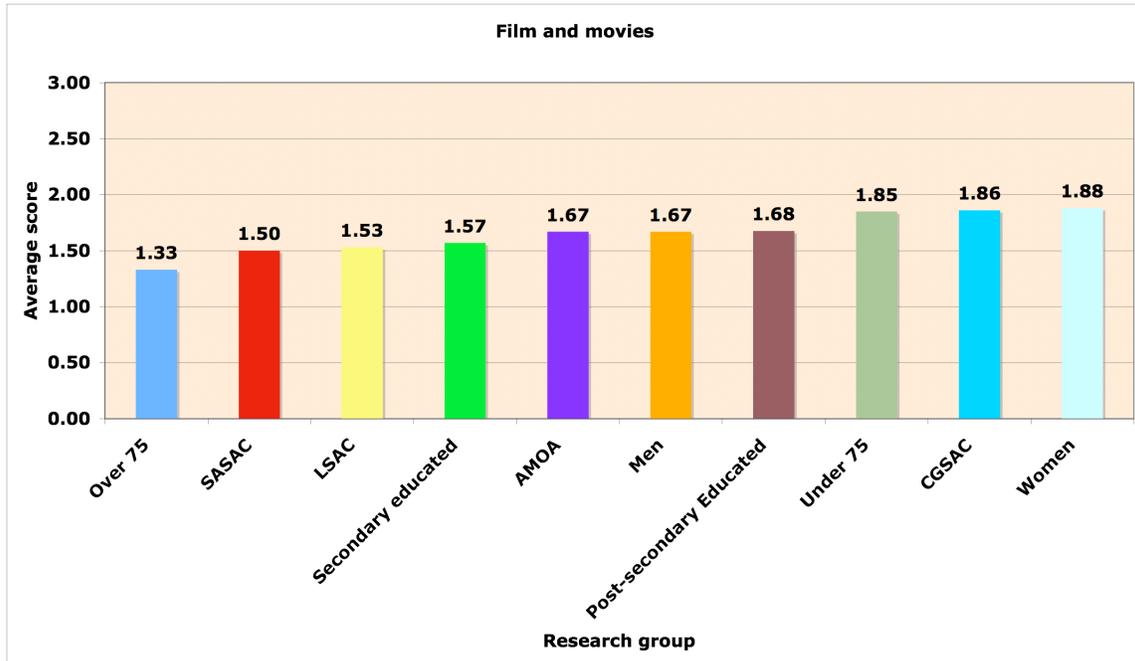


Figure 11. Popularity of the learning topic of film and movies, based on average scores.

TECHNOLOGY

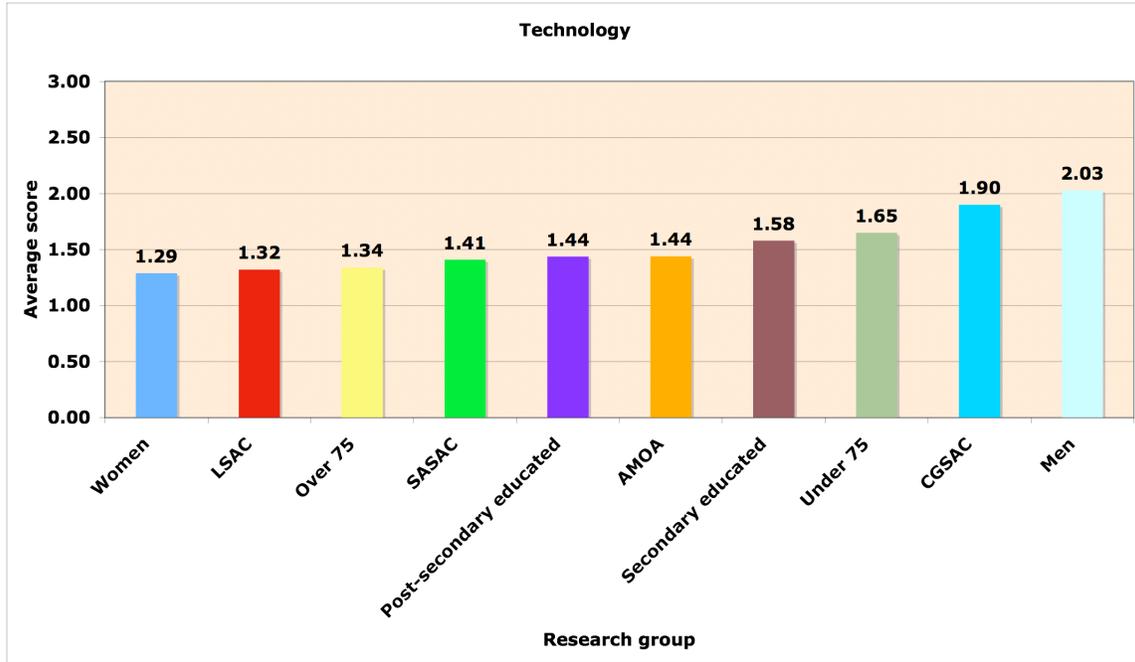


Figure 12. Popularity of the learning topic of technology, based on average scores

SPORTS

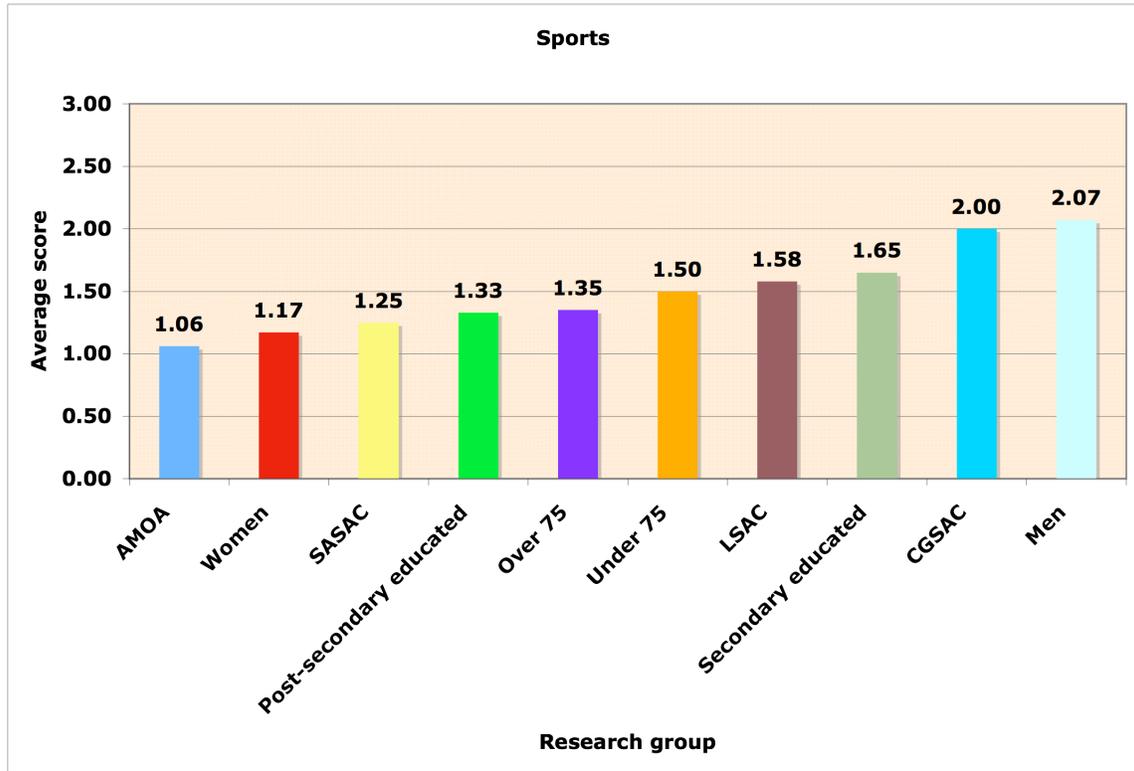


Figure 13. Popularity of the learning topic of sports, based on average scores.

Appendix E: Survey Results Charts for Preferred Art Media

ALL SITES

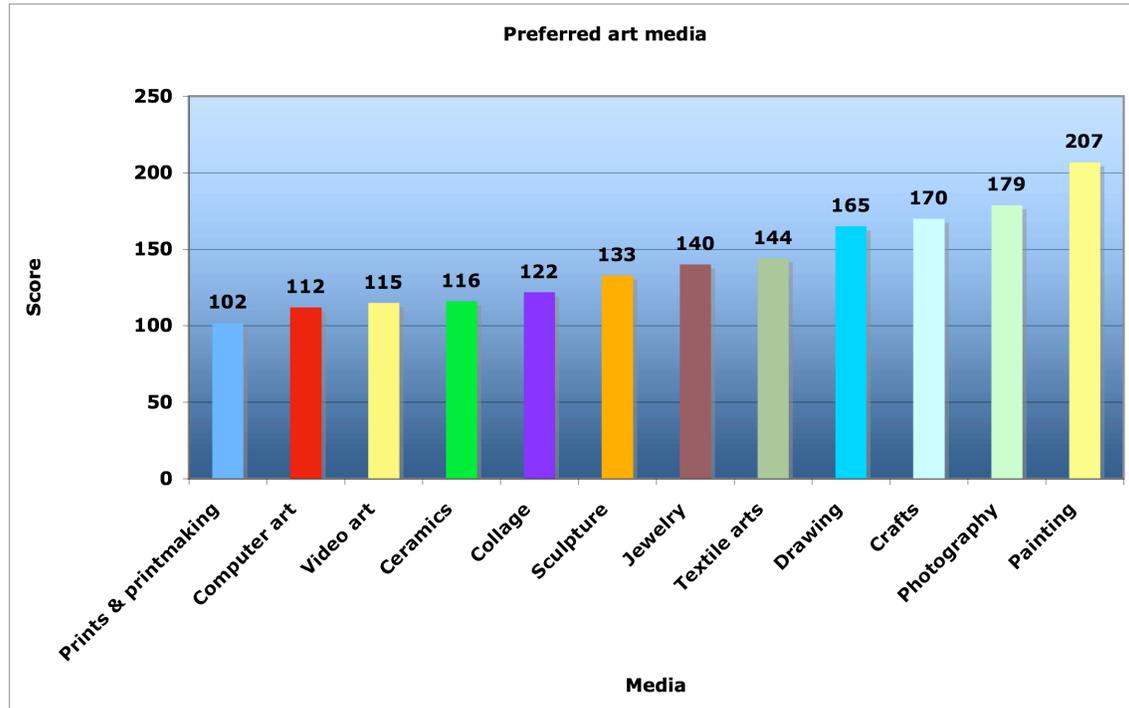


Figure 14. Preferred art media results for all sites, based on total scores.

PAINTING

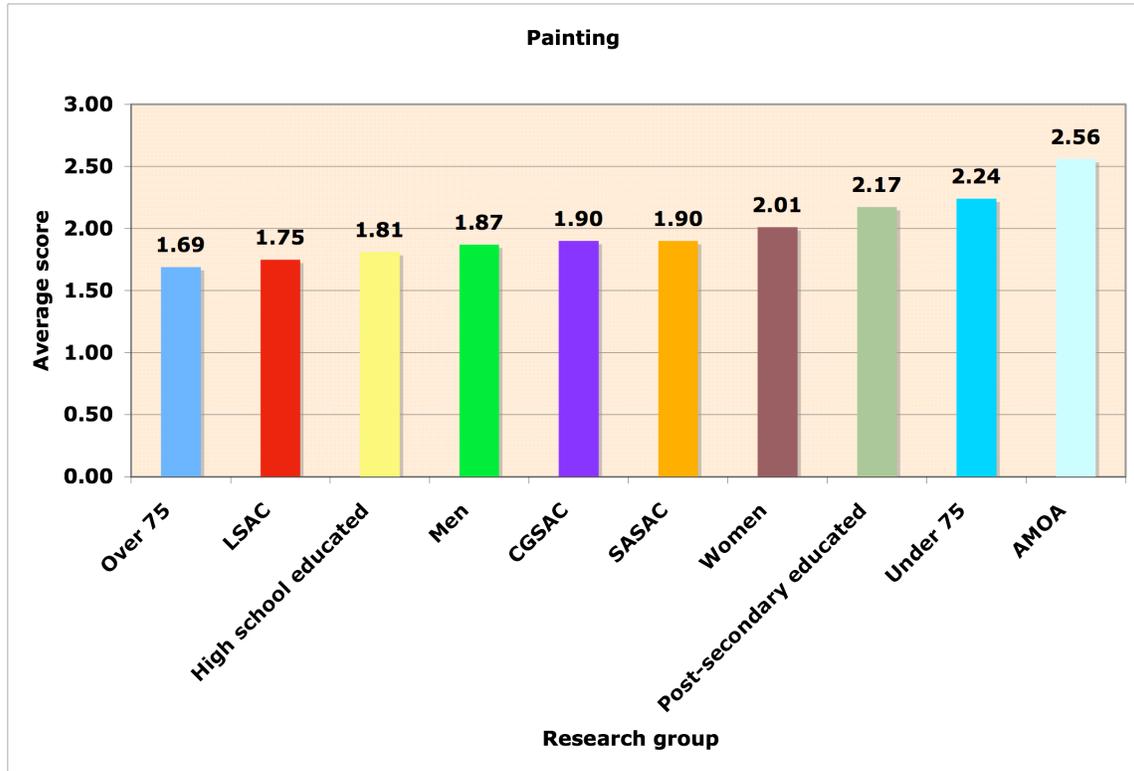


Figure 15. Popularity of the medium of painting, based on average scores.

PHOTOGRAPHY

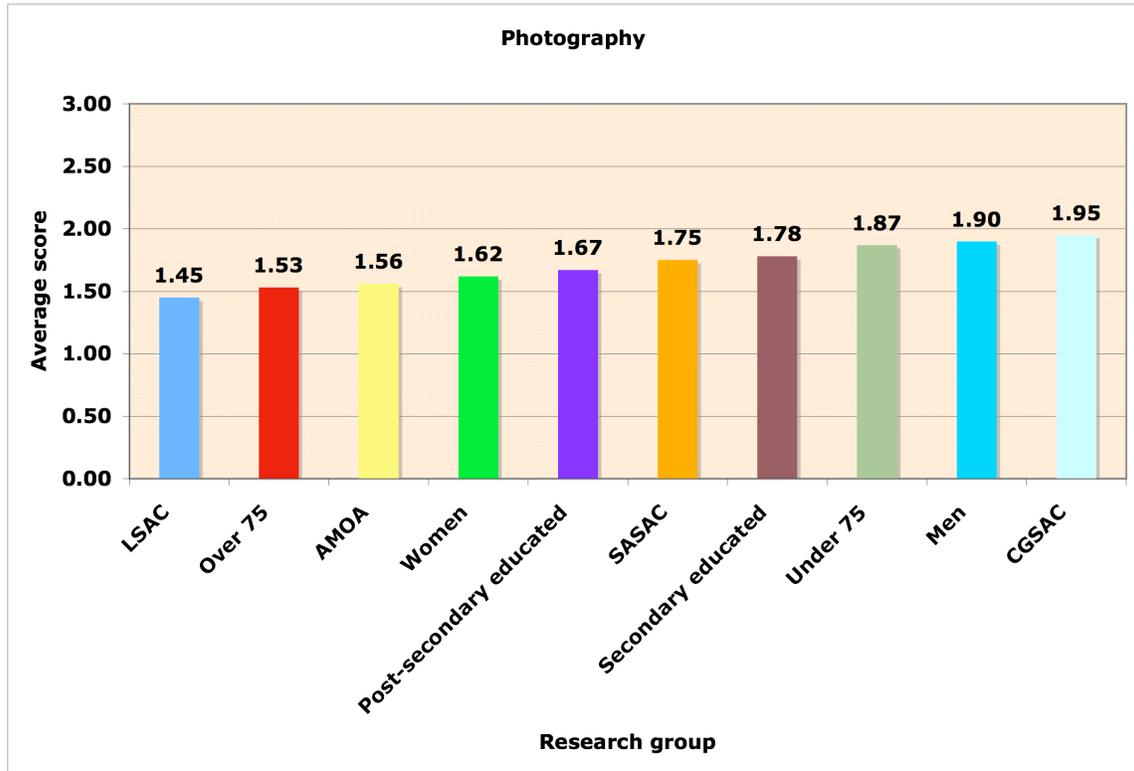


Figure 16. Popularity of the medium of photography, based on average scores.

CRAFTS

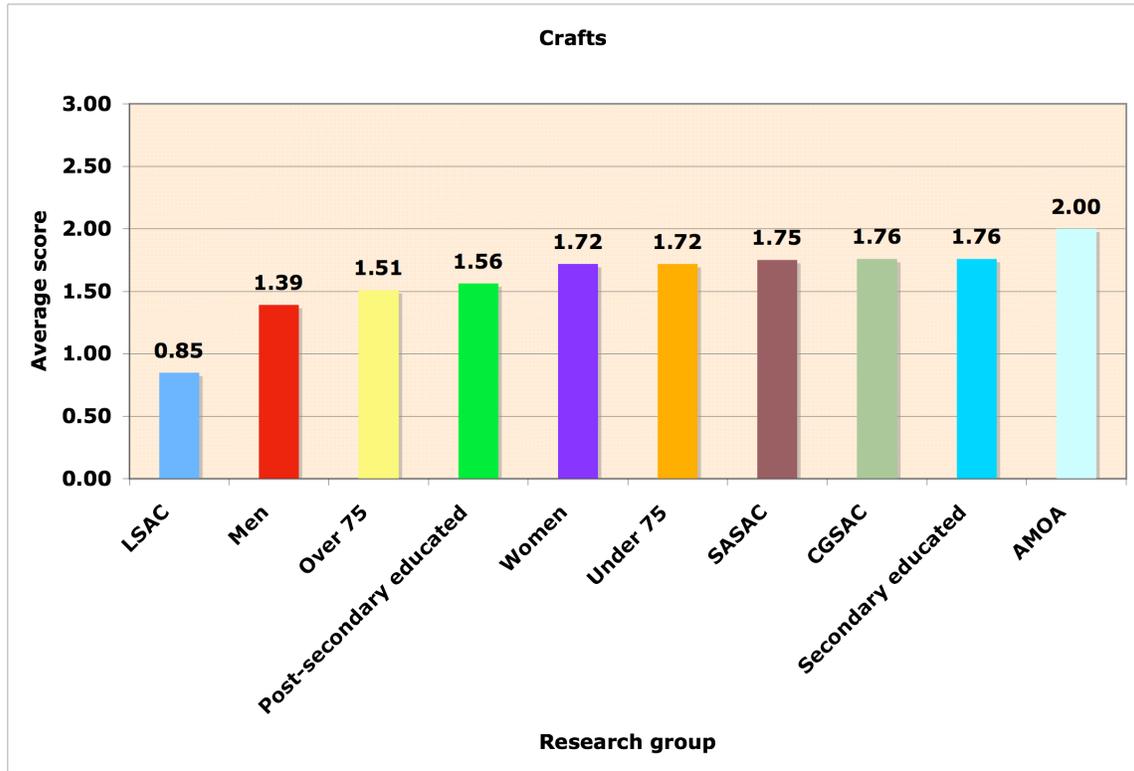


Figure 17. Popularity of craft media, based on average scores.

DRAWING

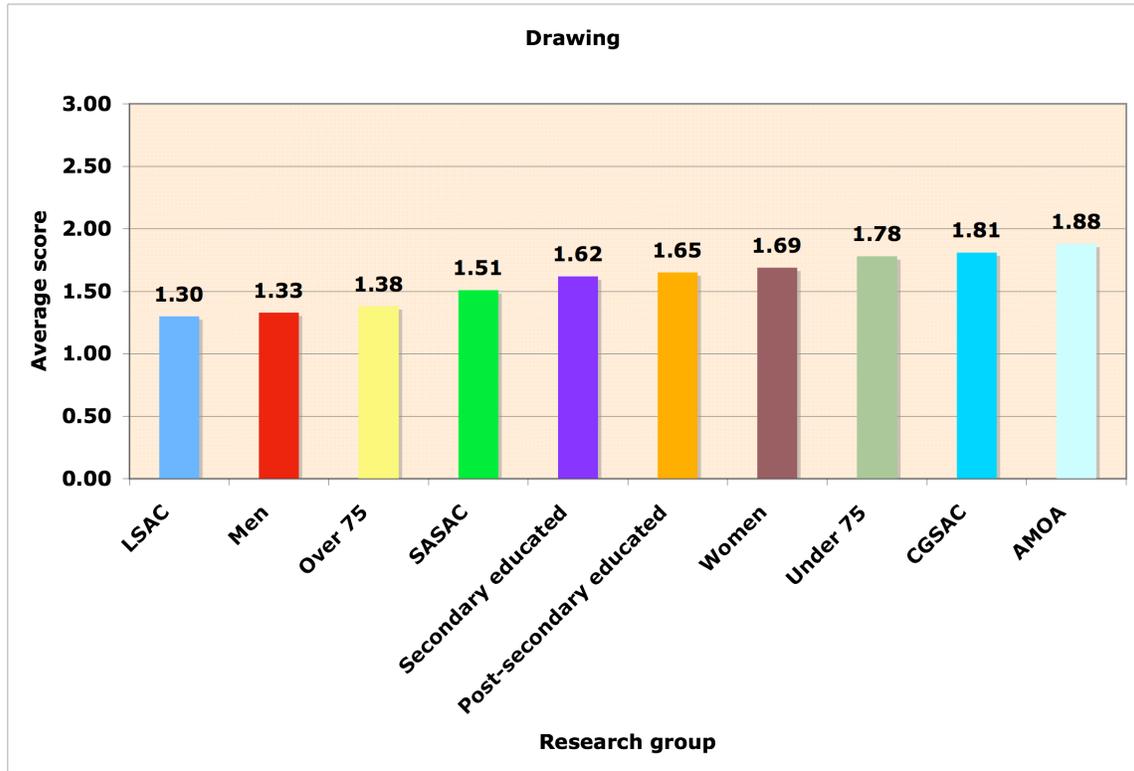


Figure 18. Popularity of the medium of drawing, based on average scores.

TEXTILE ARTS

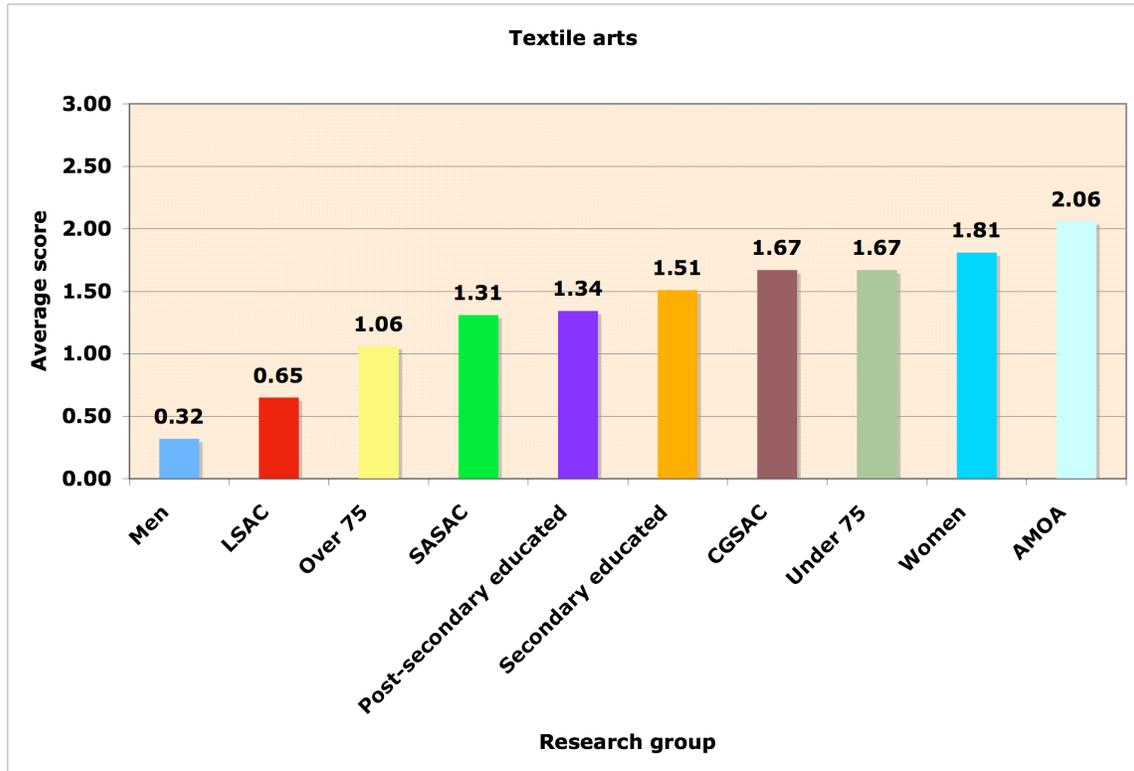


Figure 19. Popularity of textile art media, based on average scores.

JEWELRY

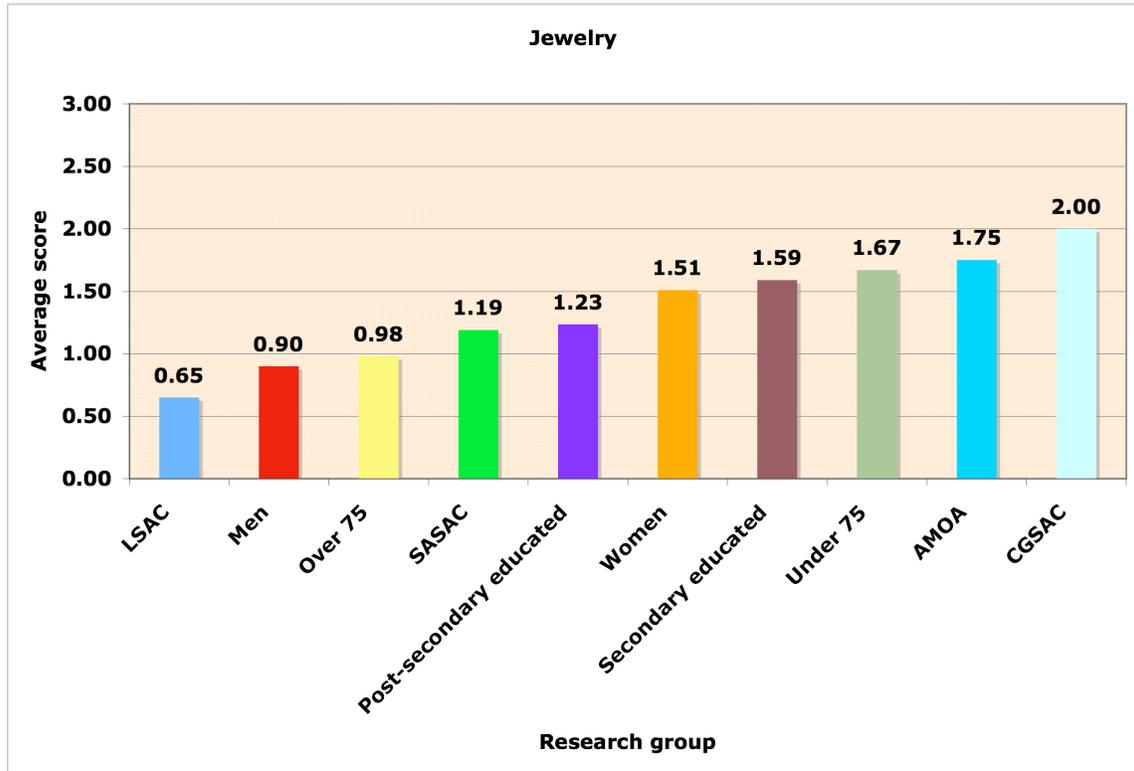


Figure 20. Popularity of the medium of jewelry, based on average scores.

SCULPTURE

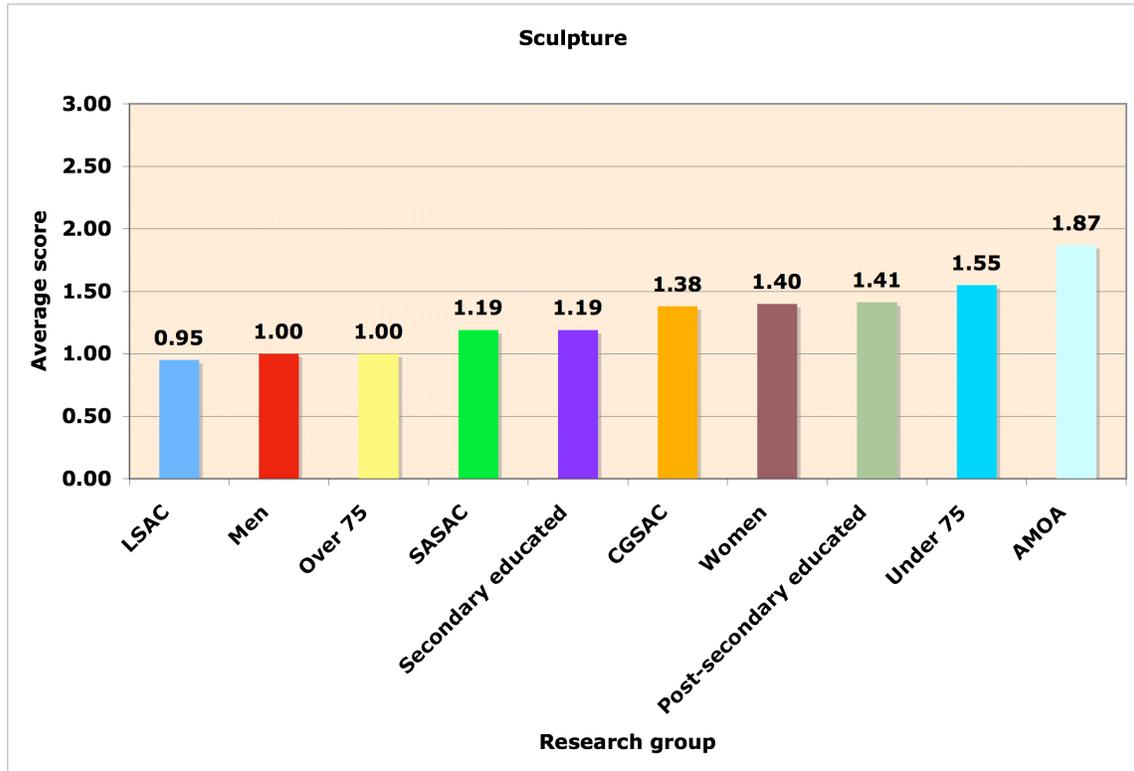


Figure 21. Popularity of the medium of sculpture, based on average scores.

COLLAGE

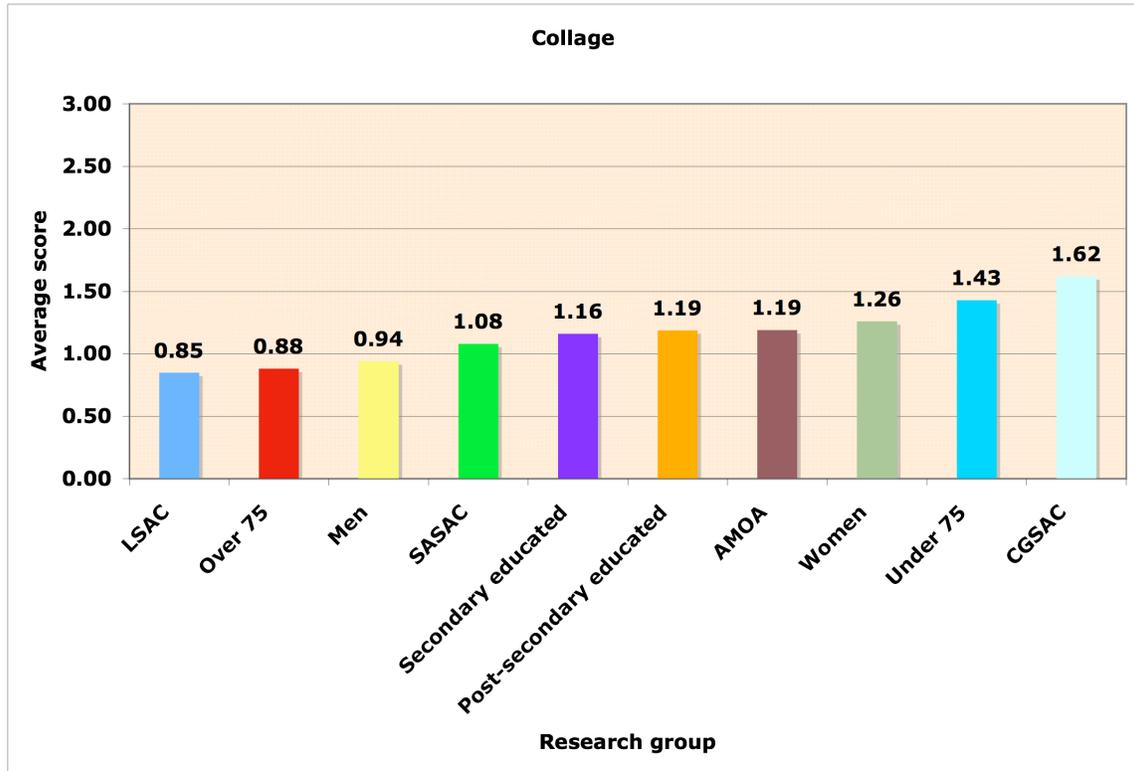


Figure 22. Popularity of the medium of collage, based on average scores.

CERAMICS

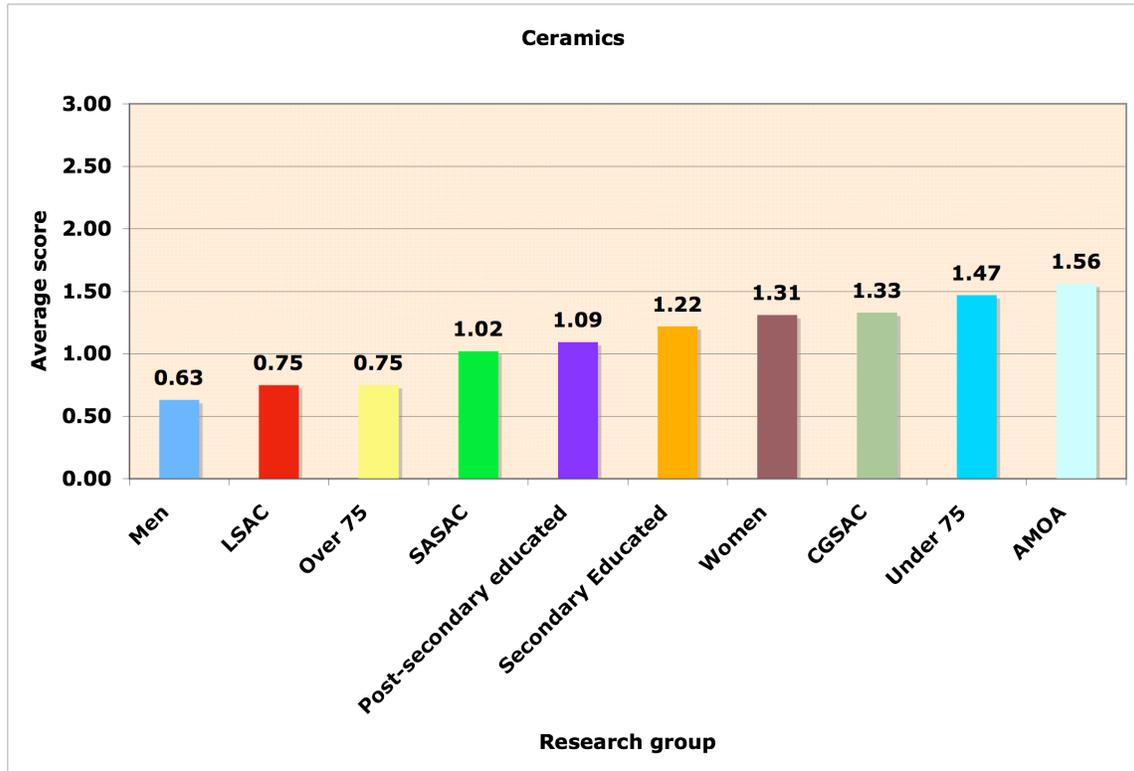


Figure 23. Popularity of the medium of ceramics, based on average scores.

VIDEO ART

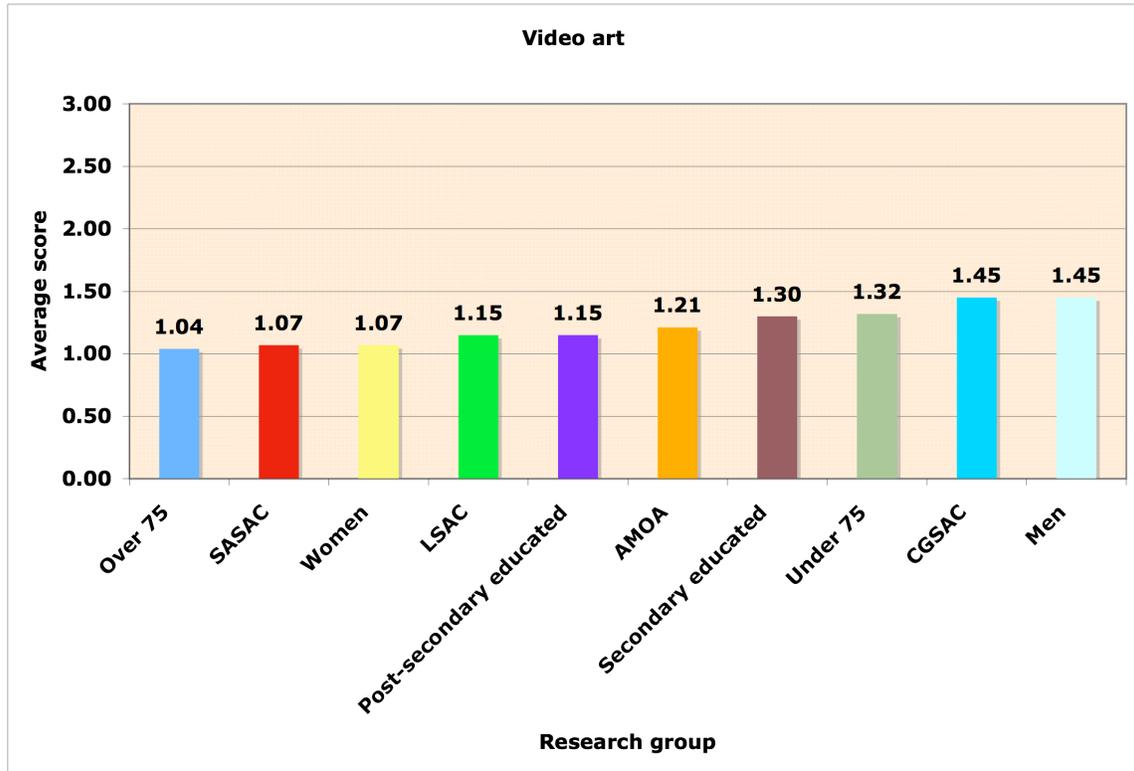


Figure 24. Popularity of the medium of video art, based on total scores.

COMPUTER ART

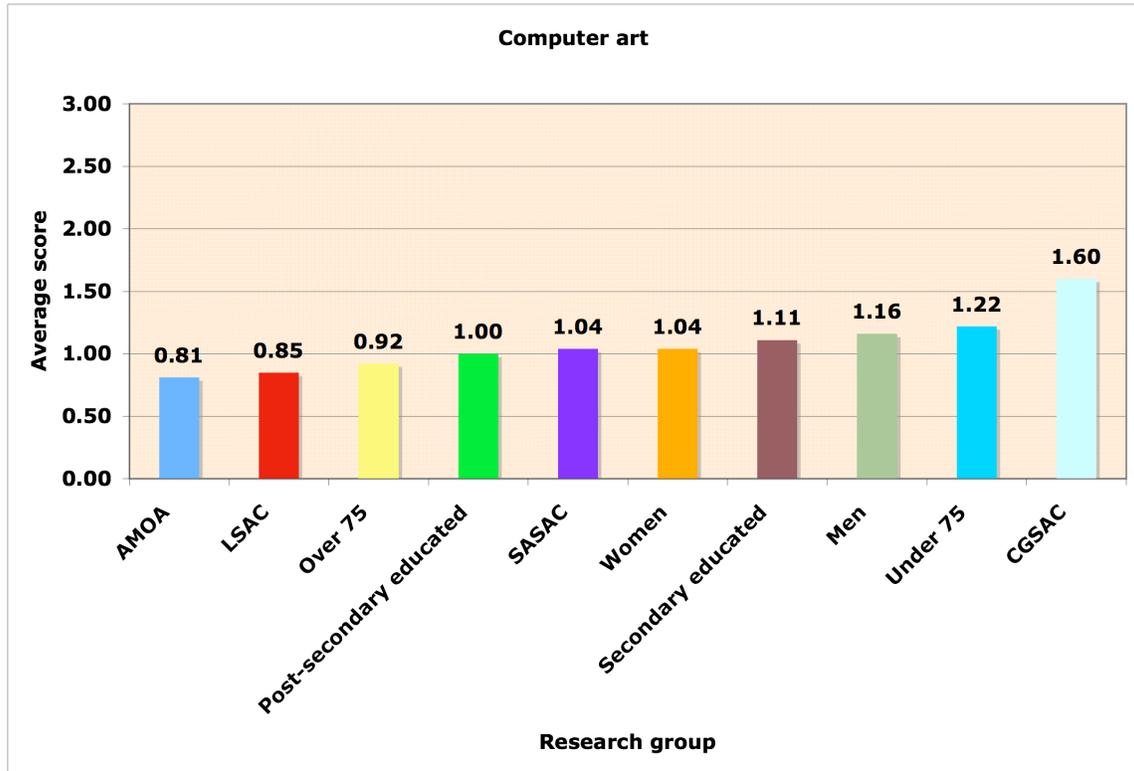


Figure 25. Popularity of the computer art media, based on average scores.

PRINTS AND PRINTMAKING

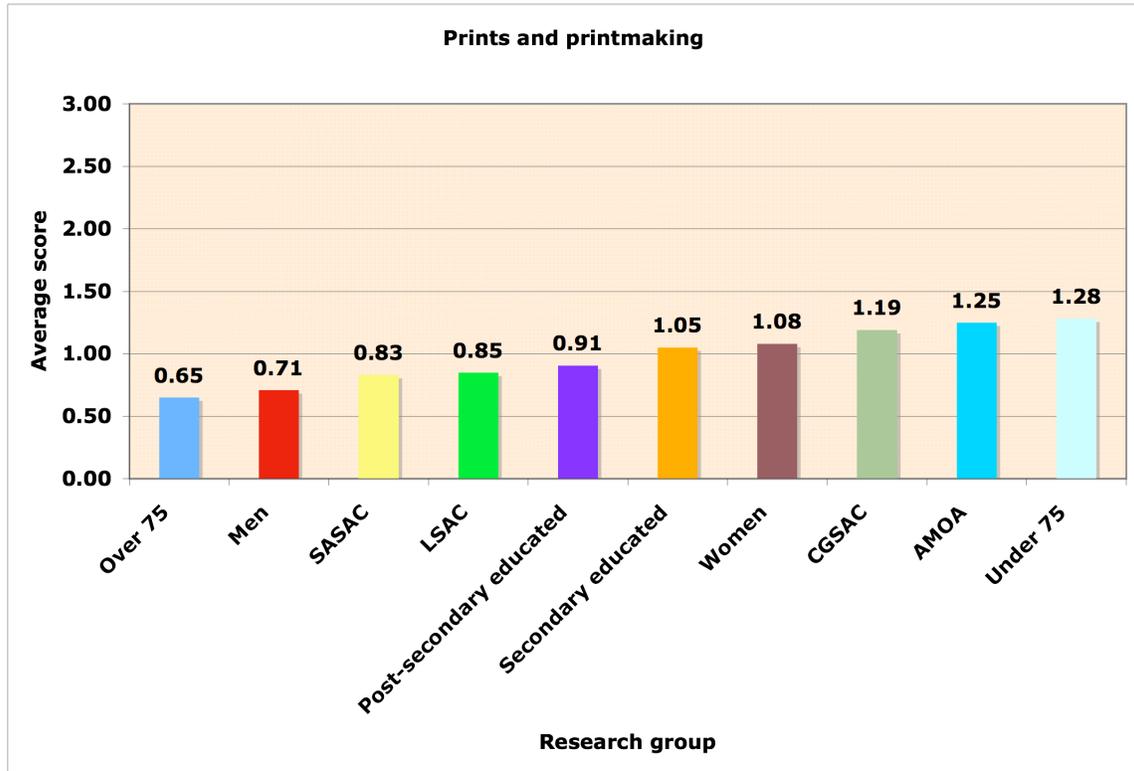


Figure 26. Popularity of print media, based on average scores.

Appendix F: Survey Results Charts for Preferred Learning Formats

ALL SITES

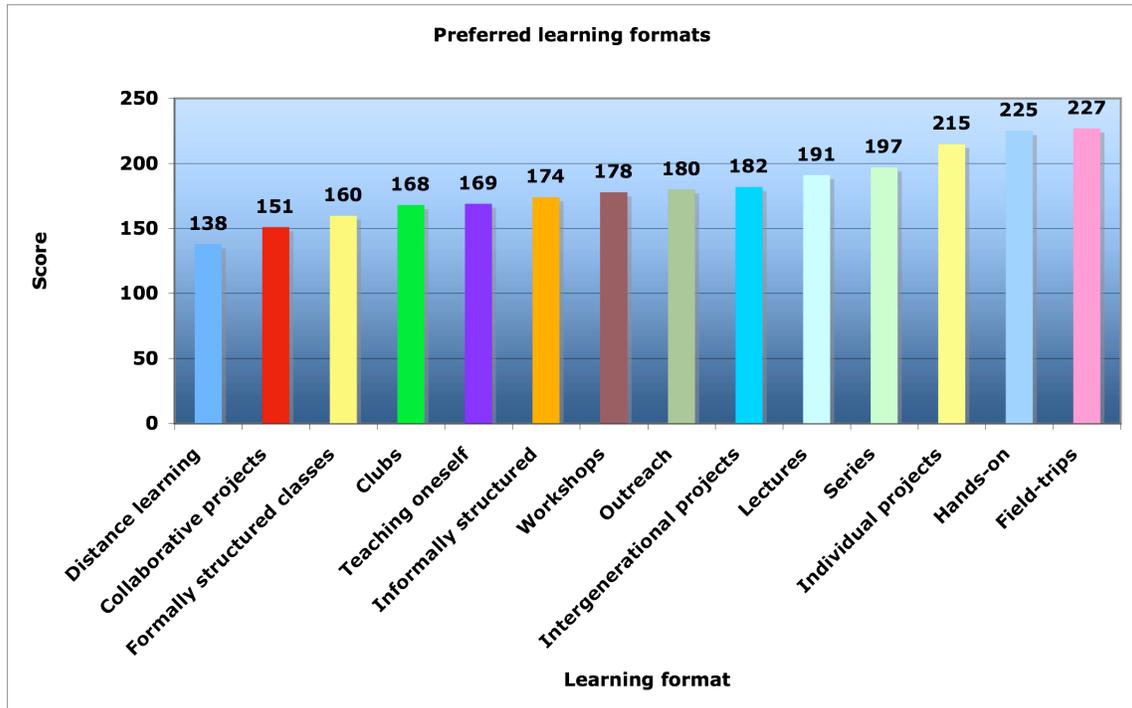


Figure 27. Preferred learning format results for all sites, based on total scores.

FIELD TRIPS

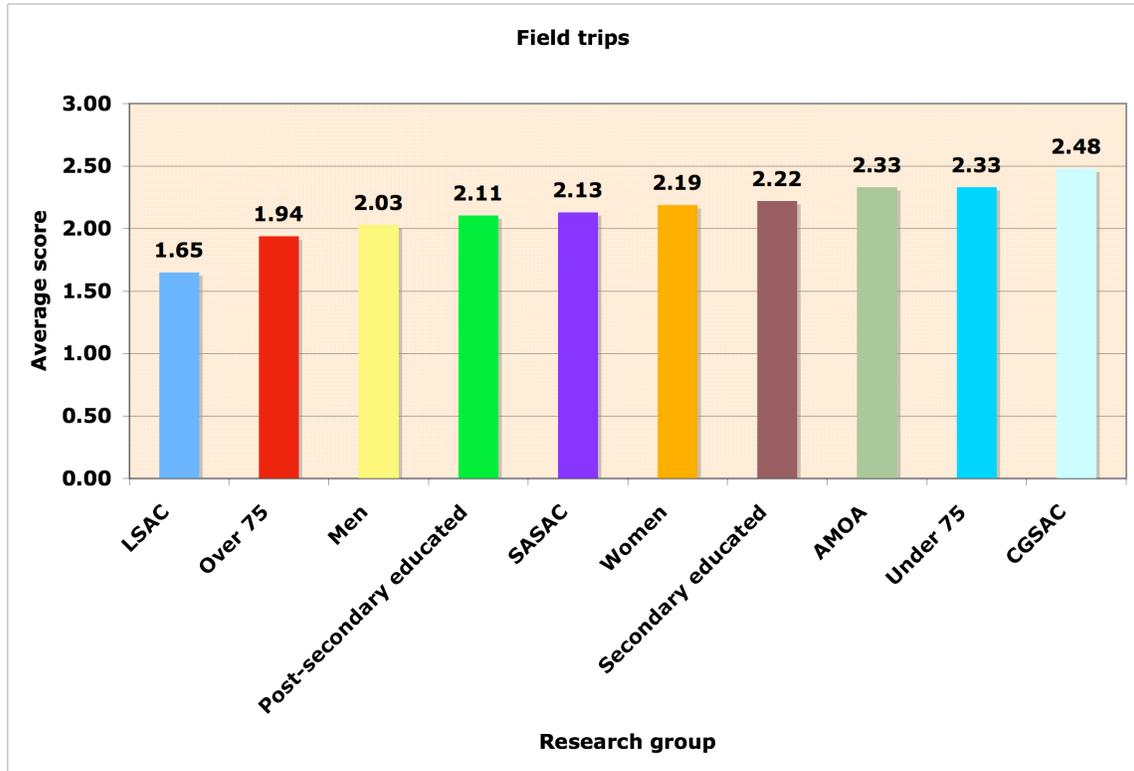


Figure 28. Popularity of the learning format of field trips, based on average scores.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

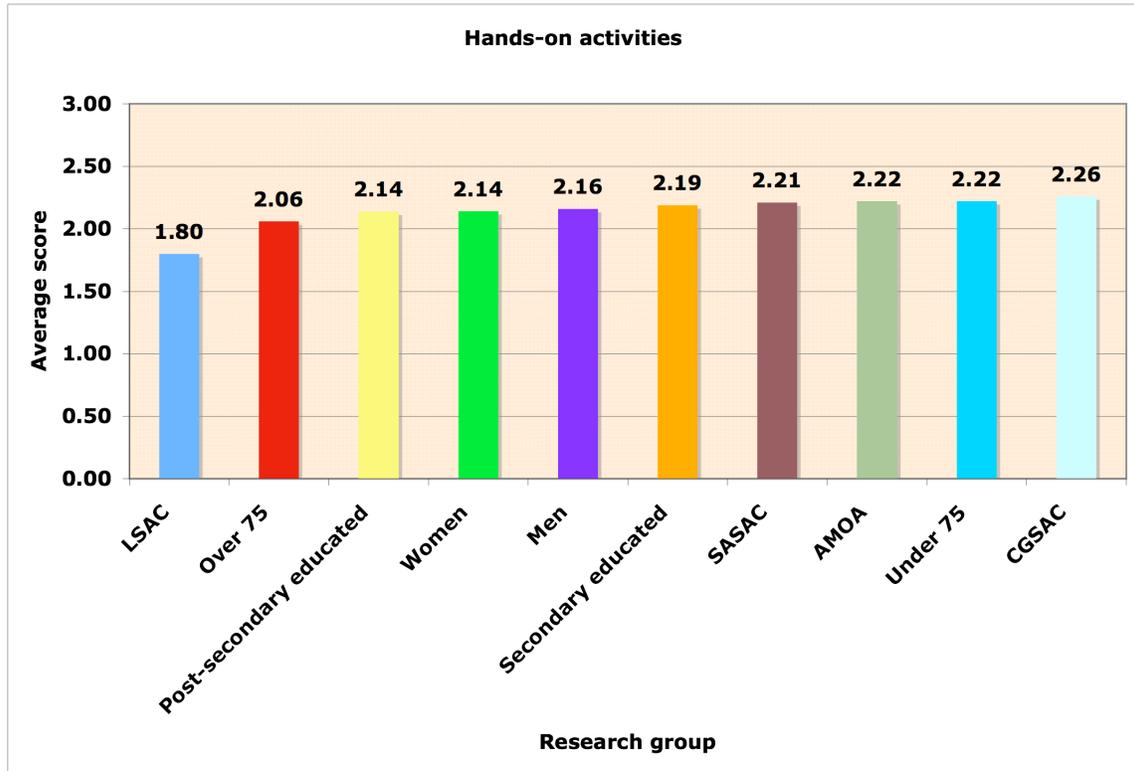


Figure 29. Popularity of the learning format of hands-on activities, based on average scores.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

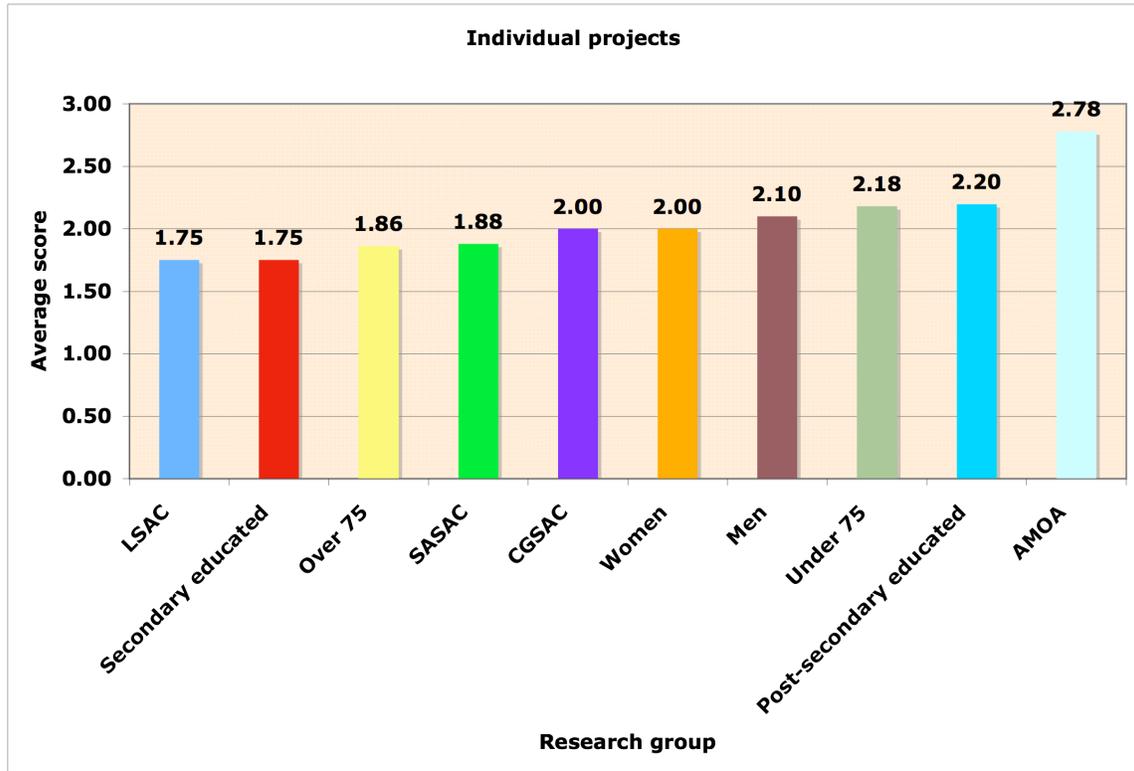


Figure 30. Popularity of the learning format of individual projects, based on average scores.

SERIES

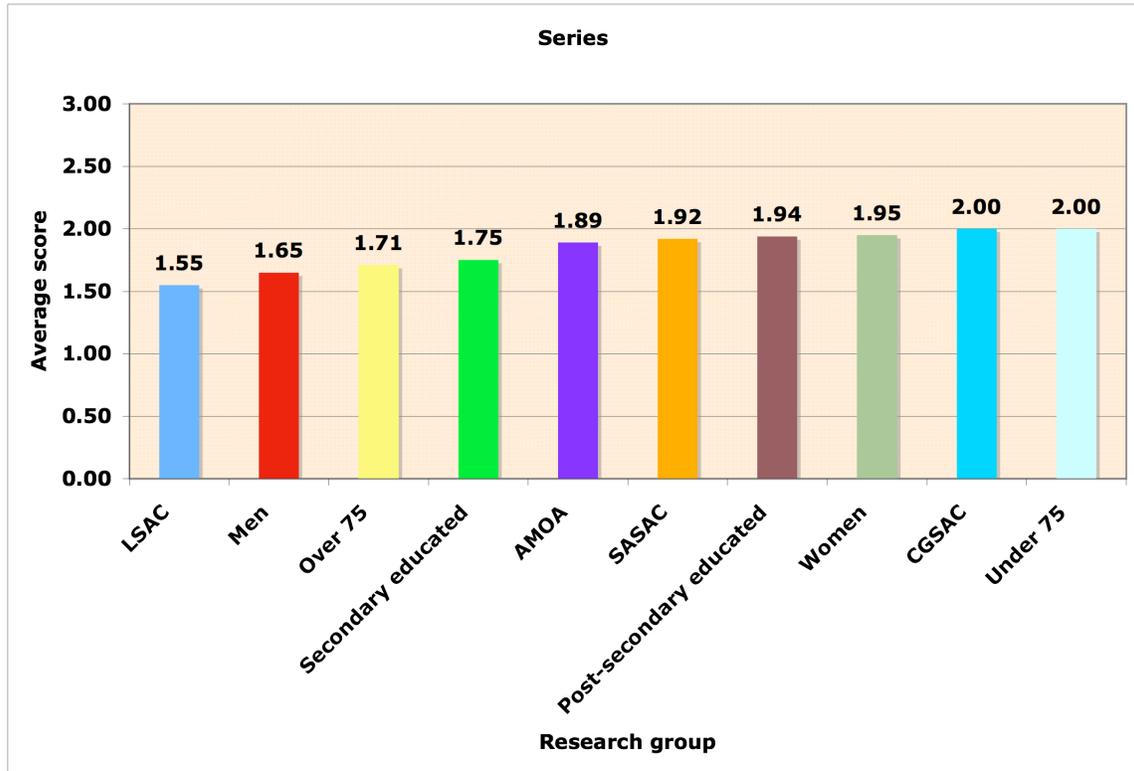


Figure 31. Popularity of the learning format of series, based on average scores.

LECTURES

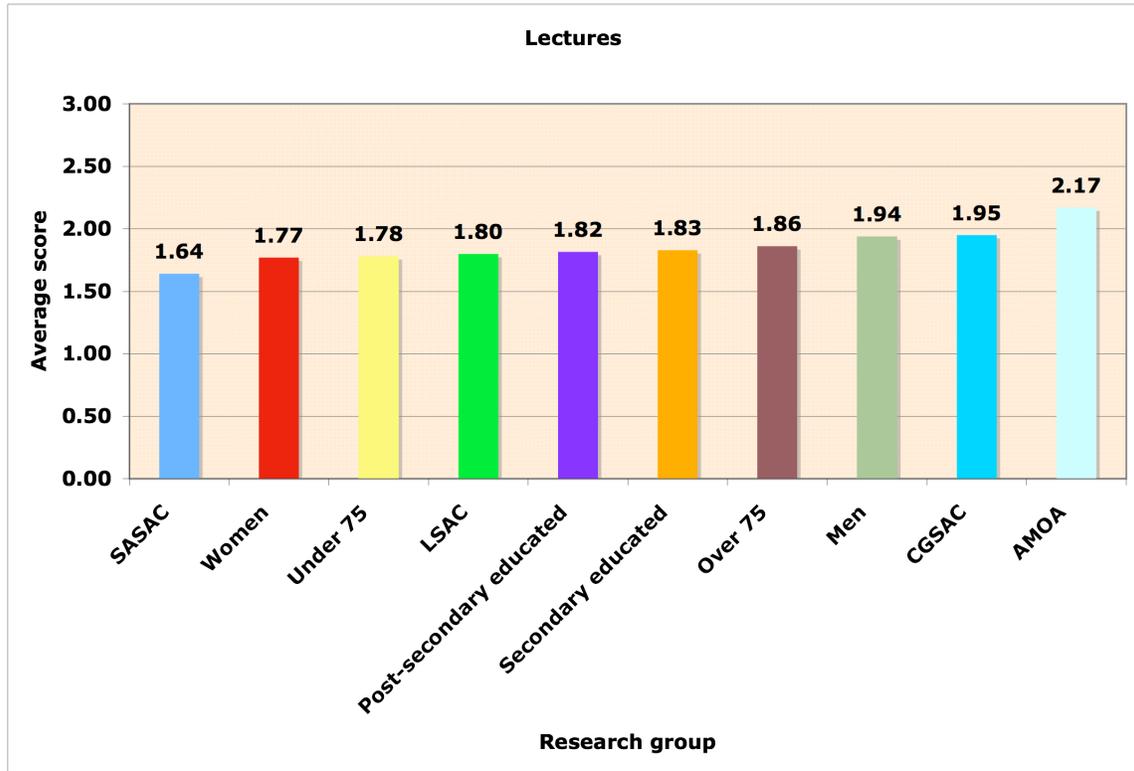


Figure 32. Popularity of the learning format of lectures, based on average scores.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS

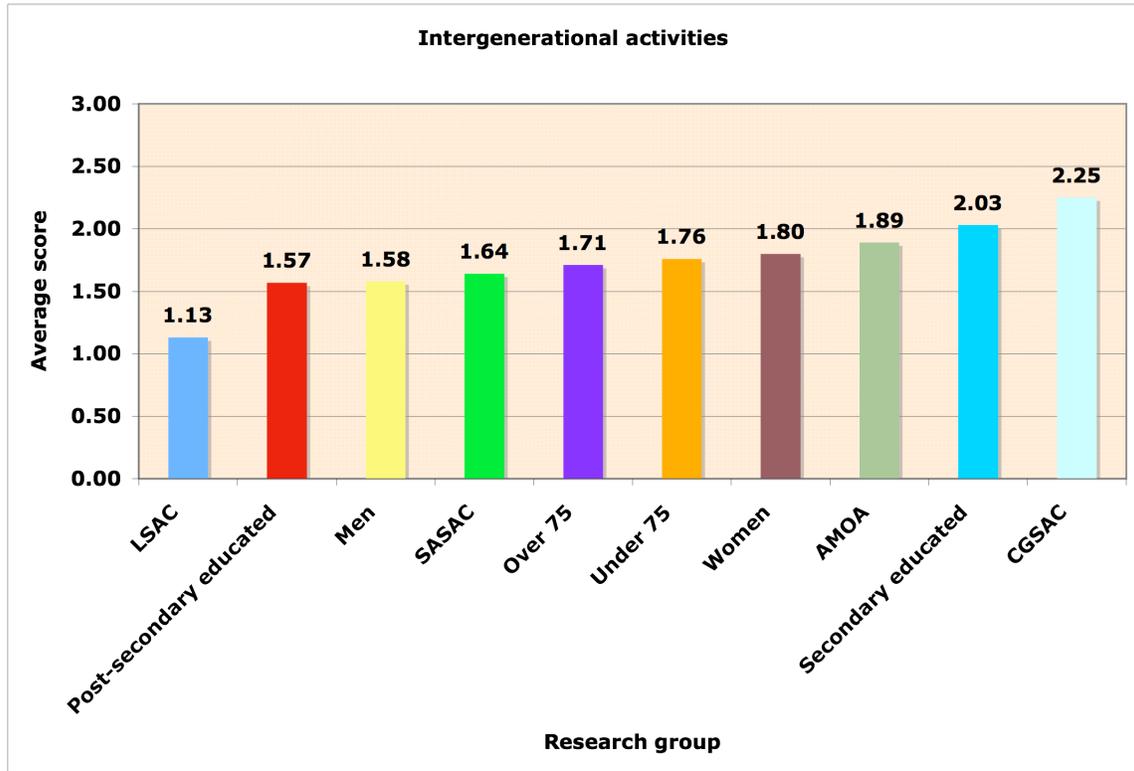


Figure 33. Popularity of the learning format of intergenerational activities, based on average scores.

OUTREACH

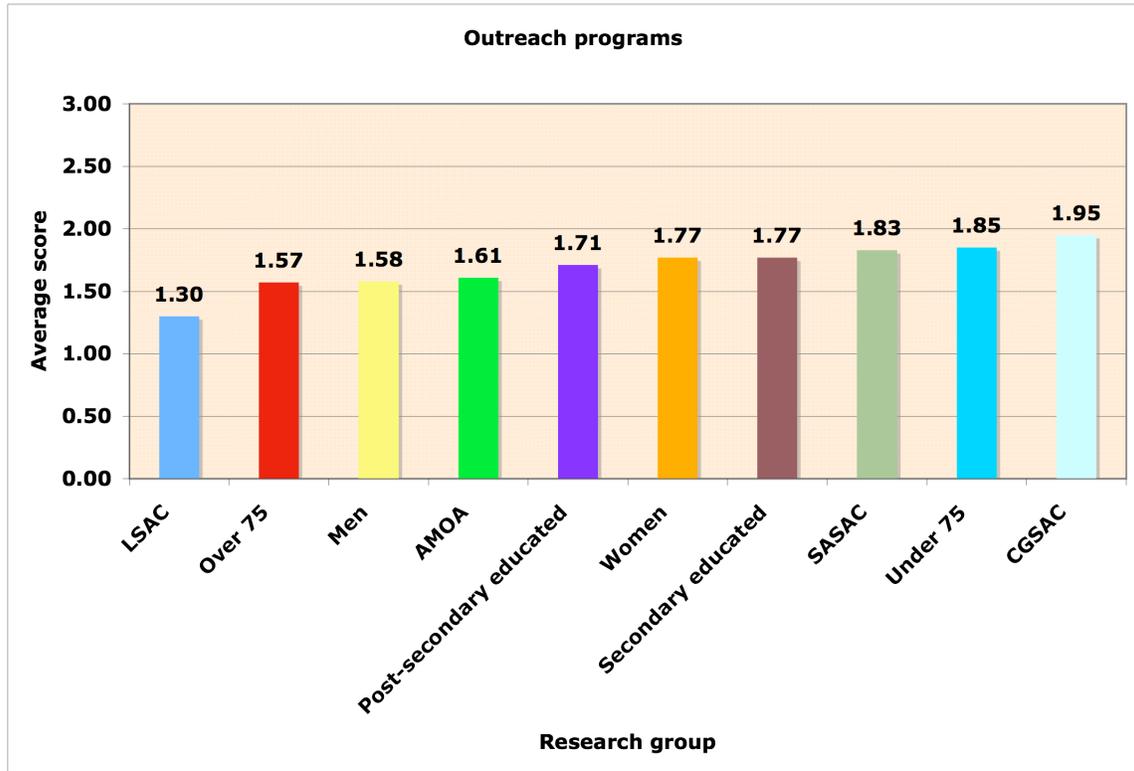


Figure 34. Popularity of the learning format of outreach programs, based on average scores.

WORKSHOPS

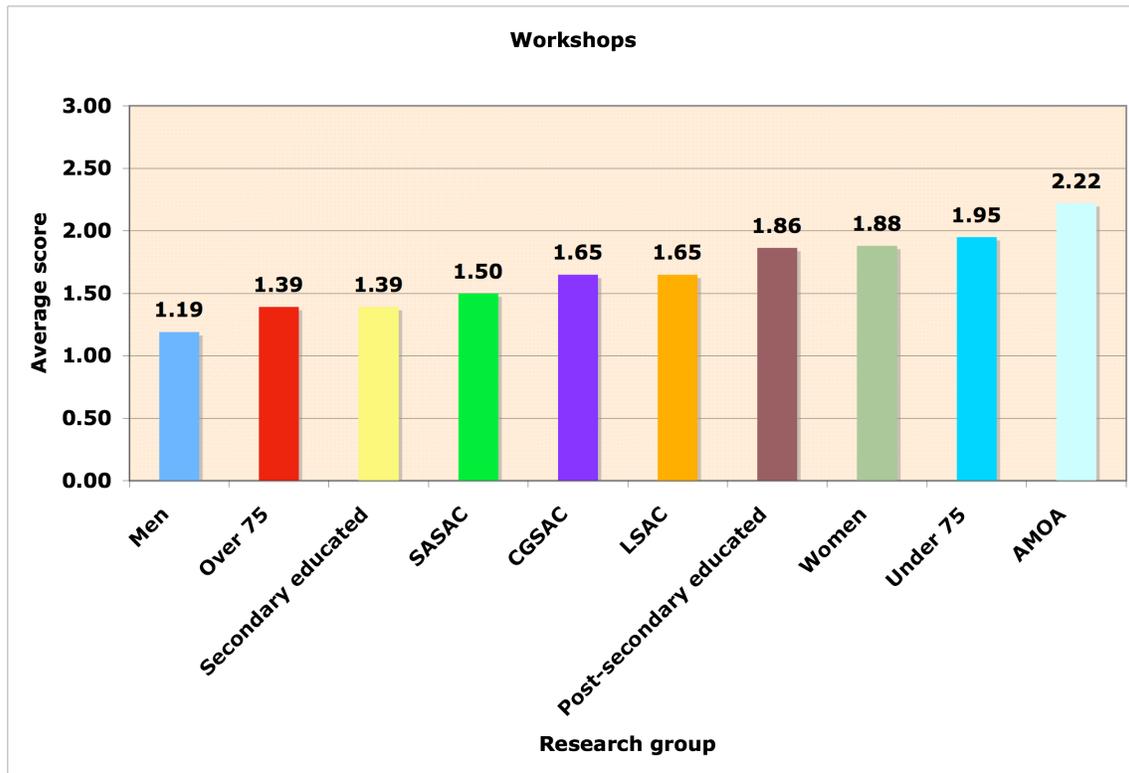


Figure 35. Popularity of the learning format of workshops, based on average scores.

INFORMALLY STRUCTURED PROGRAMS

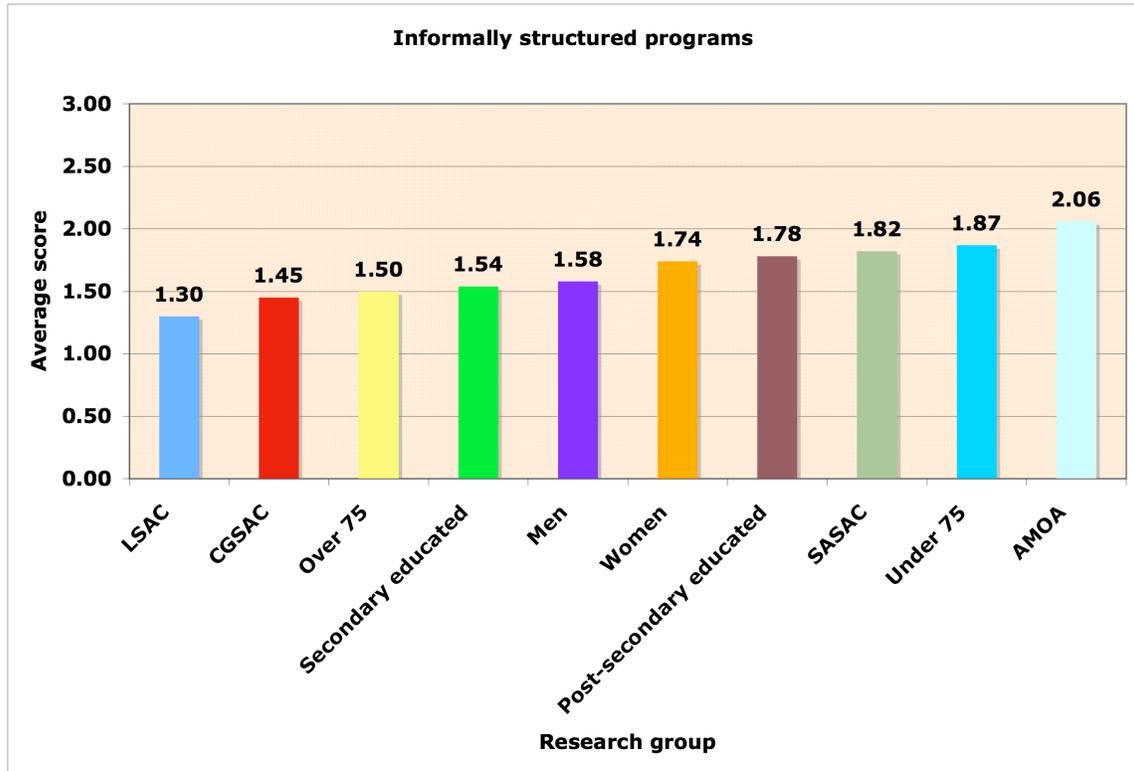


Figure 36. Popularity of the learning format of informal programs, based on average scores.

TEACHING ONESELF

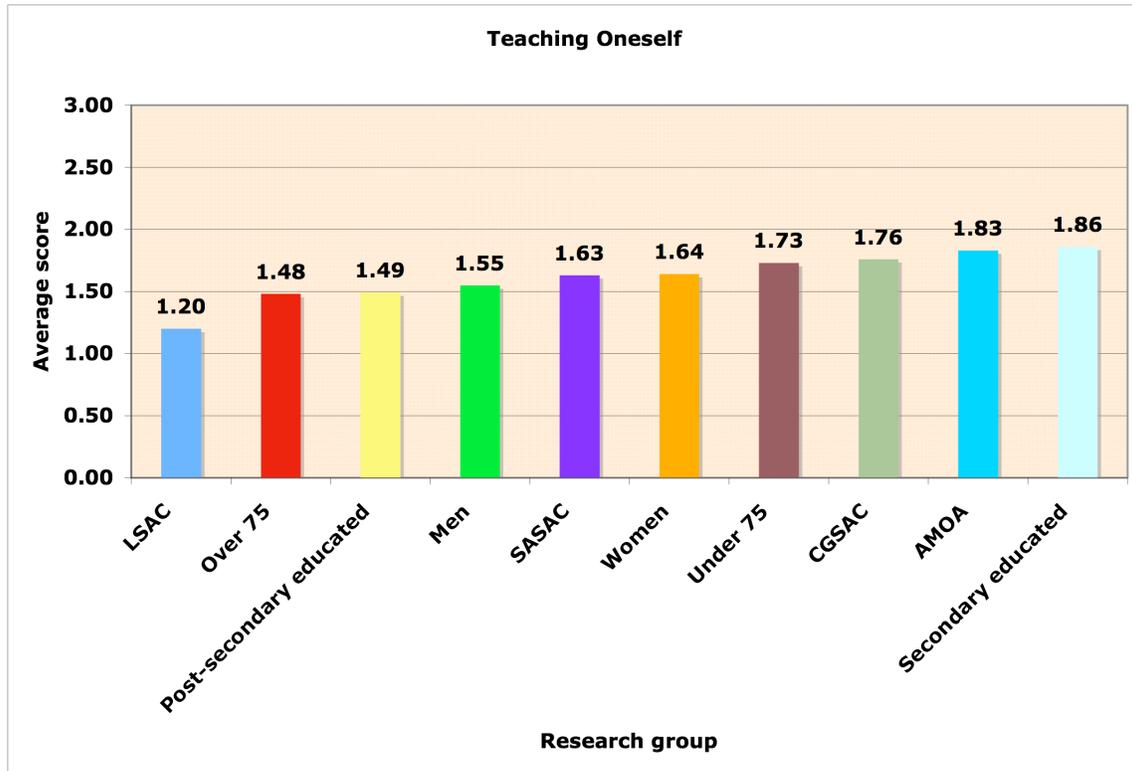


Figure 37. Popularity of the learning format of teaching oneself, based on average scores.

CLUBS

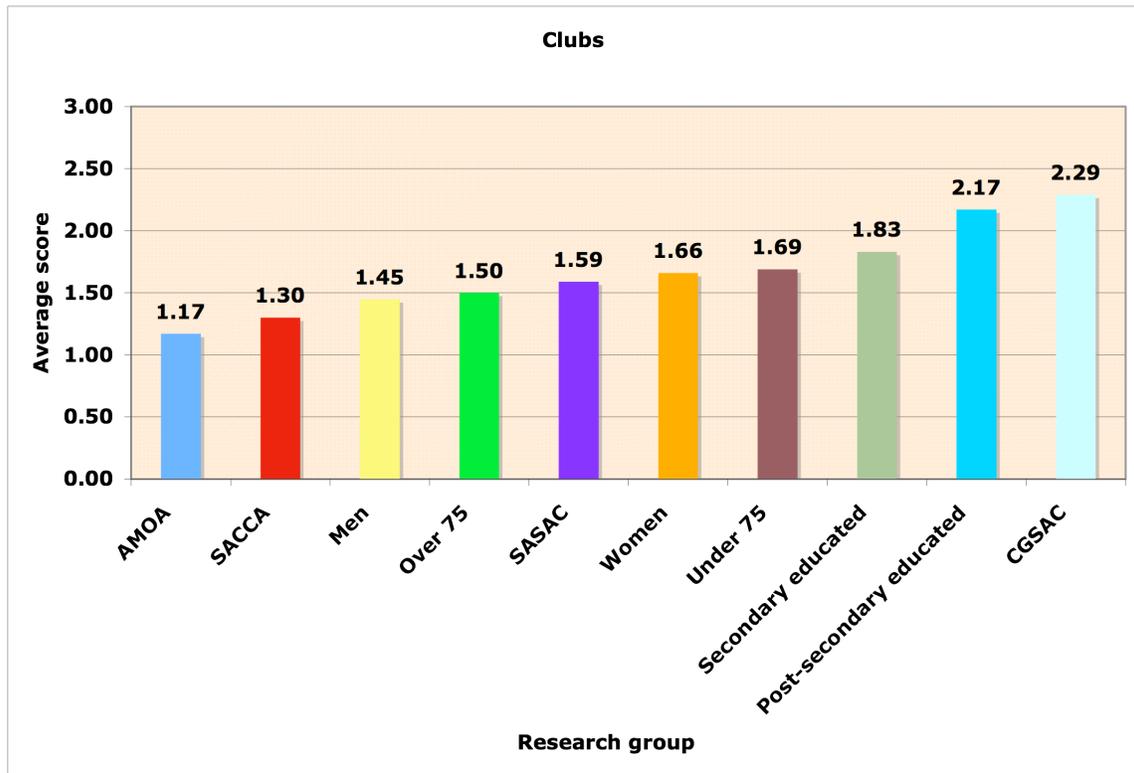


Figure 38. Popularity of the learning format of clubs, based on average scores.

FORMALLY STRUCTURED PROGRAMS

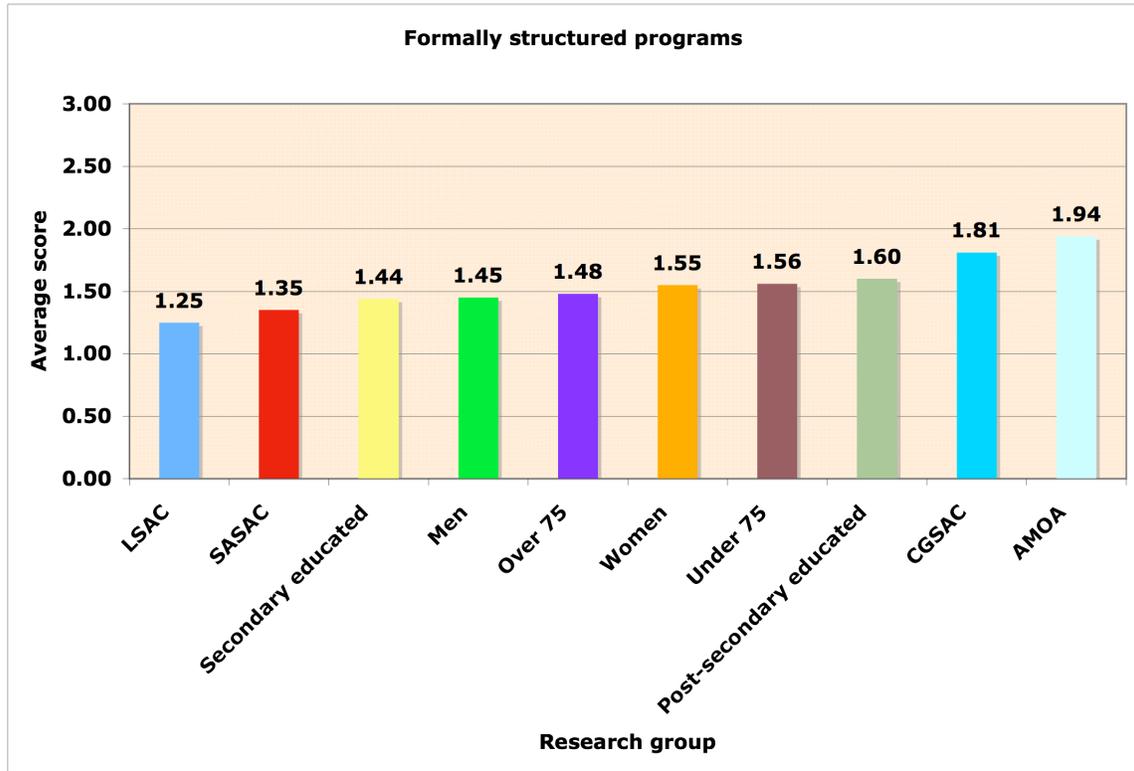


Figure 39. Popularity of the learning format of formally structured classes, based on average scores.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

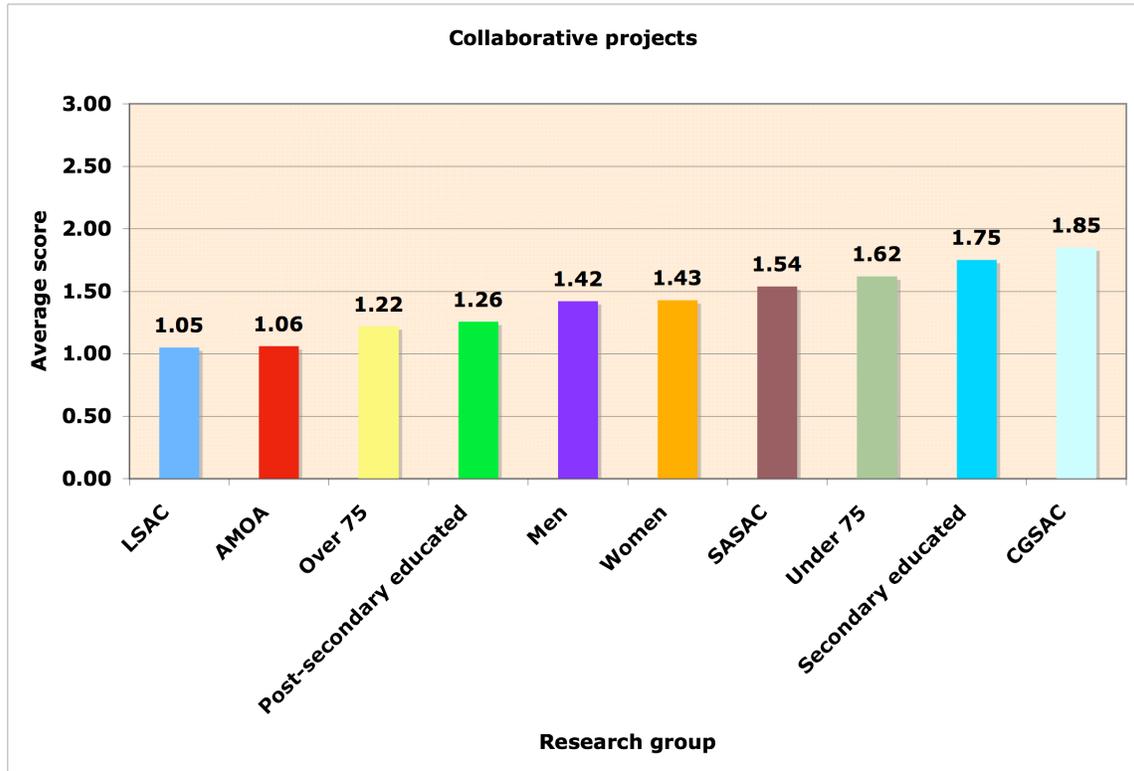


Figure 40. Popularity of the learning forma of collaborative projects, based on average scores.

DISTANCE LEARNING

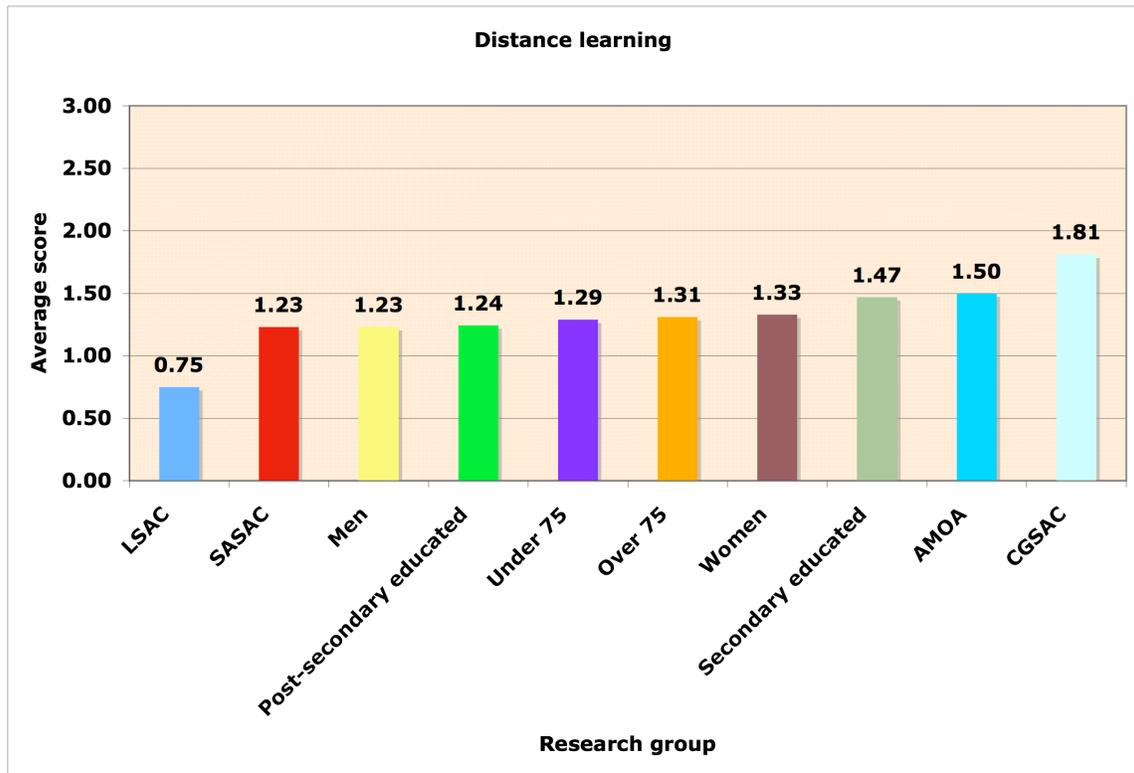


Figure 41. Popularity of the learning format of distance learning, based on average scores.

Appendix G: Survey Results Charts for Preferred Learning Goals

ALL SITES

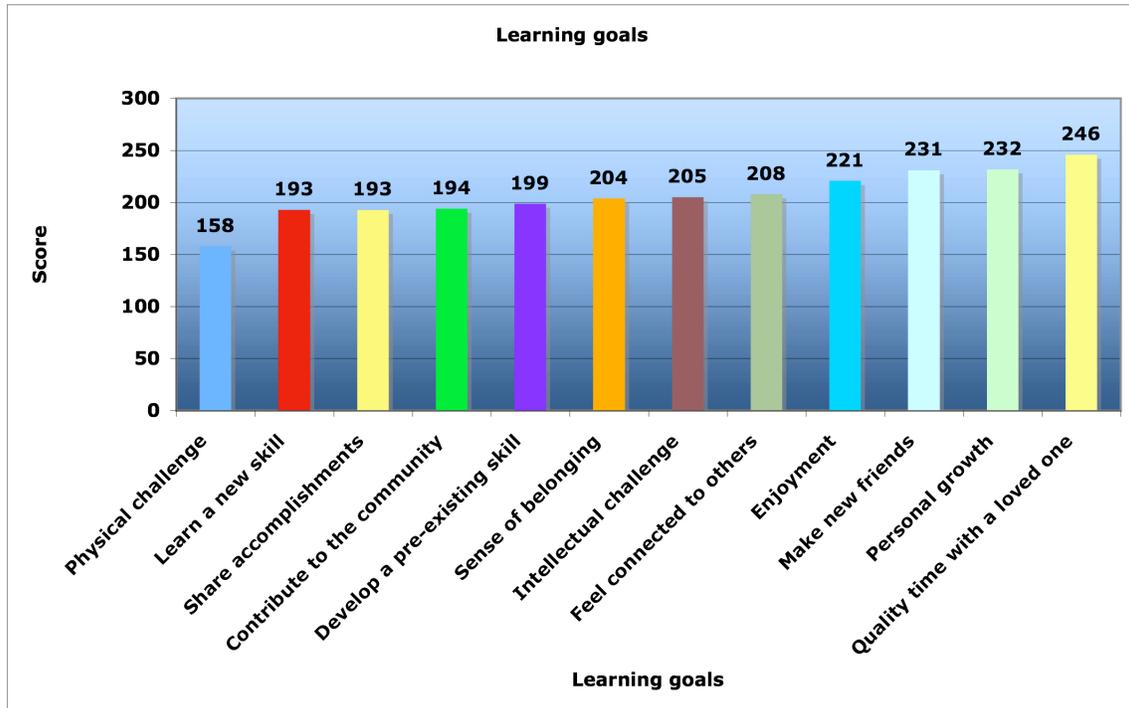


Figure 42. Learning goal results for all sites, based on total score.

SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH A LOVED ONE

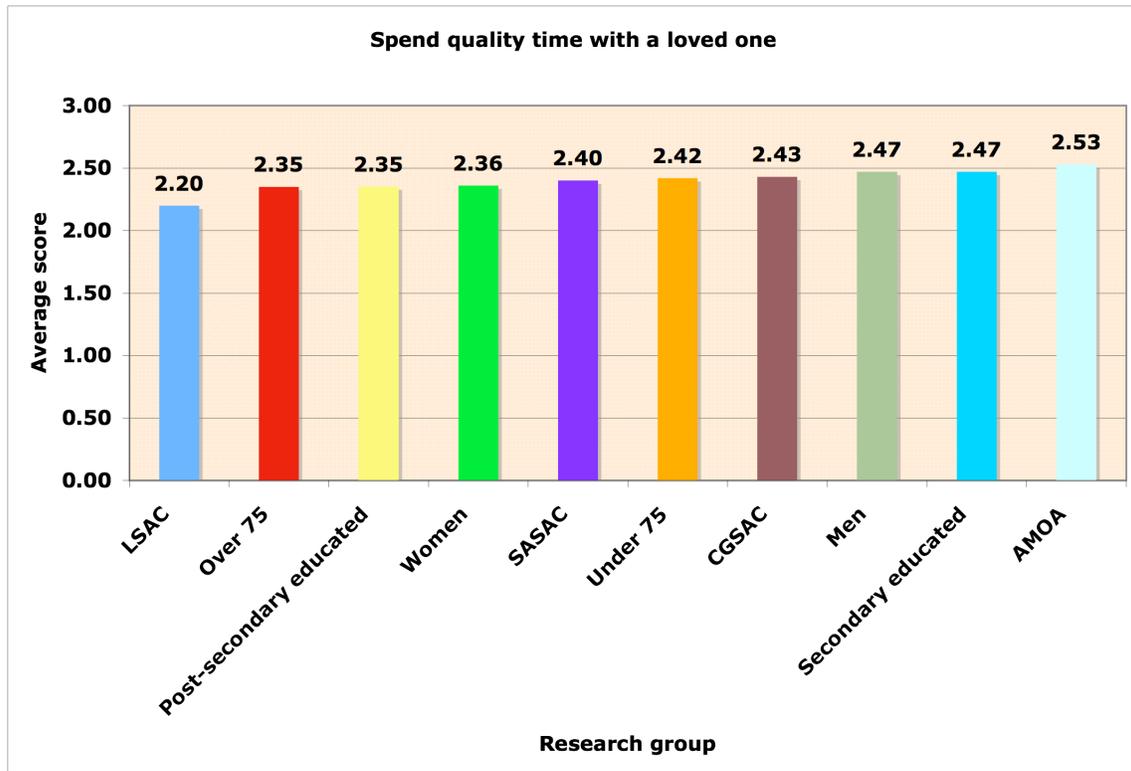


Figure 43. The popularity of the learning goal of quality time with a loved one, based on average scores.

PERSONAL GROWTH

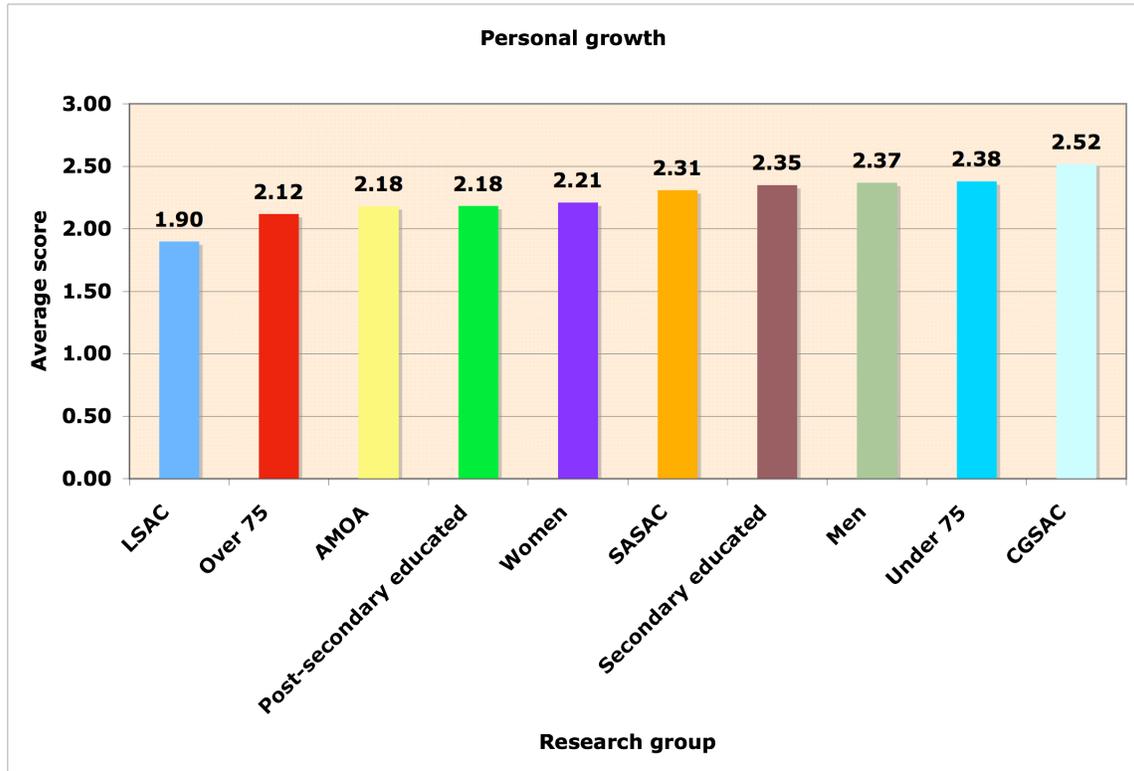


Figure 44. Popularity of the learning goal of personal growth, based on average scores.

MAKE NEW FRIENDS

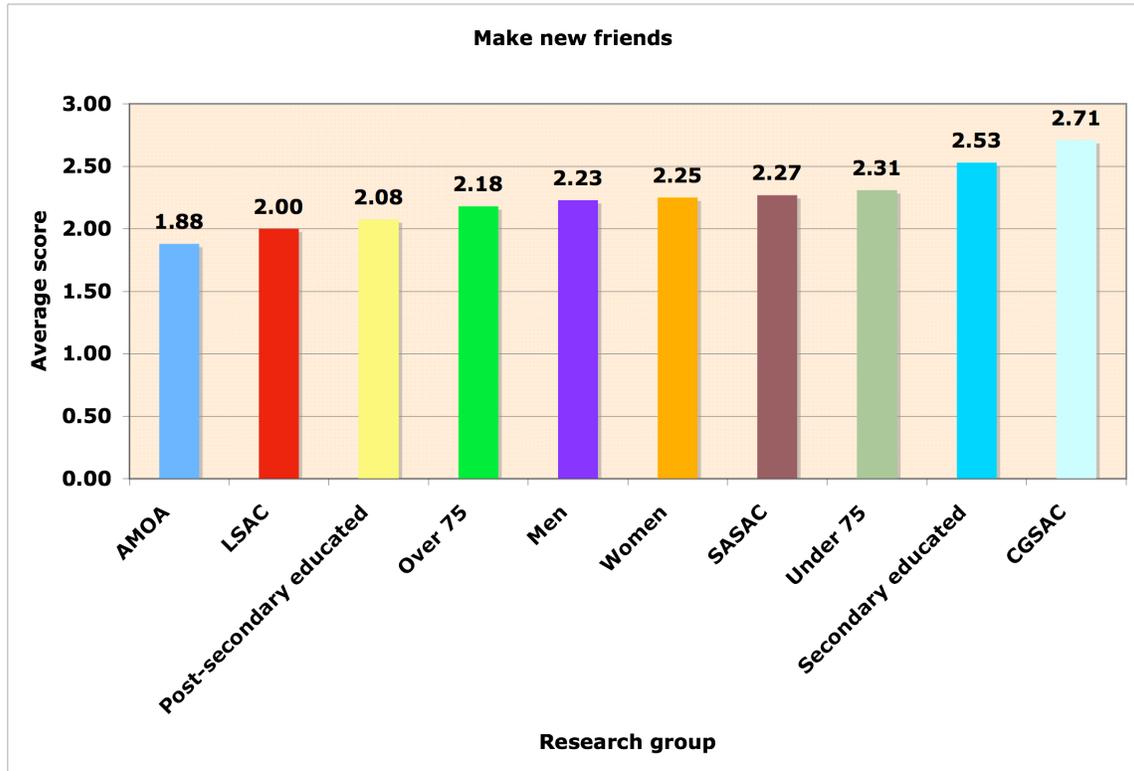


Figure 45. Popularity of the learning goal of making new friends, based on average scores.

ENJOYMENT

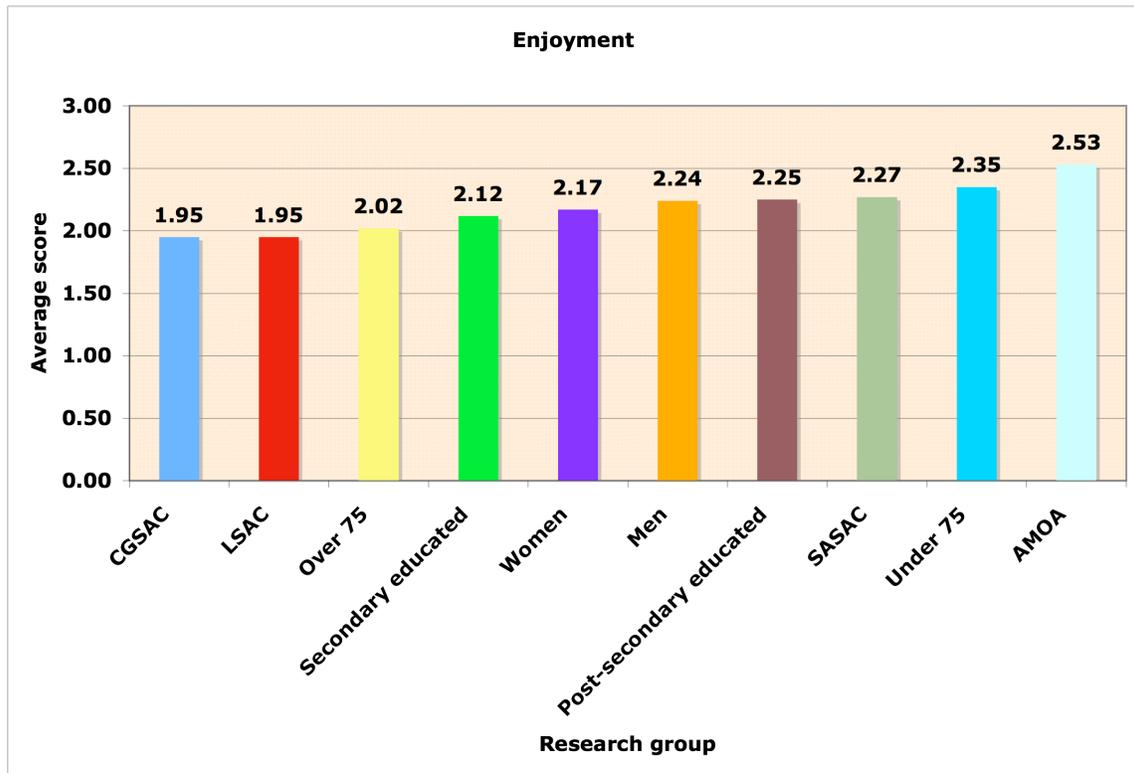


Figure 46. Popularity of the learning goal of enjoyment, based on average scores.

FEEL CONNECTED TO OTHERS

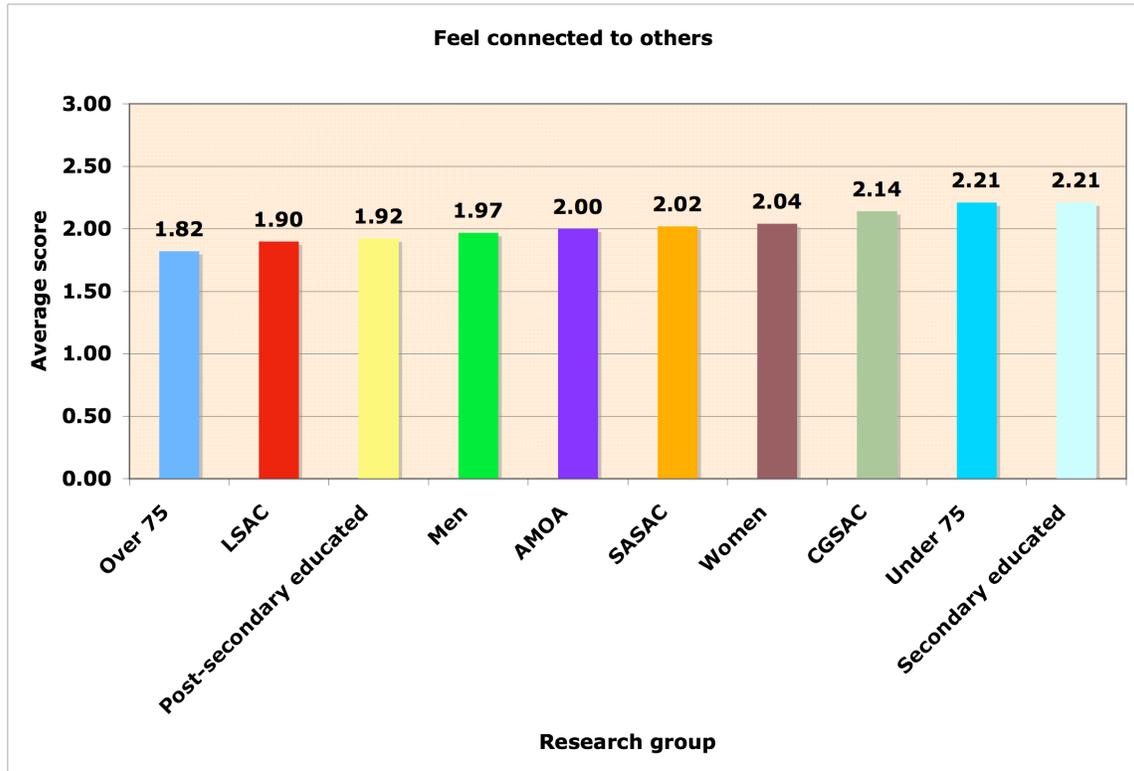


Figure 47. Popularity of the learning goal to feel connected to others, based on average scores.

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

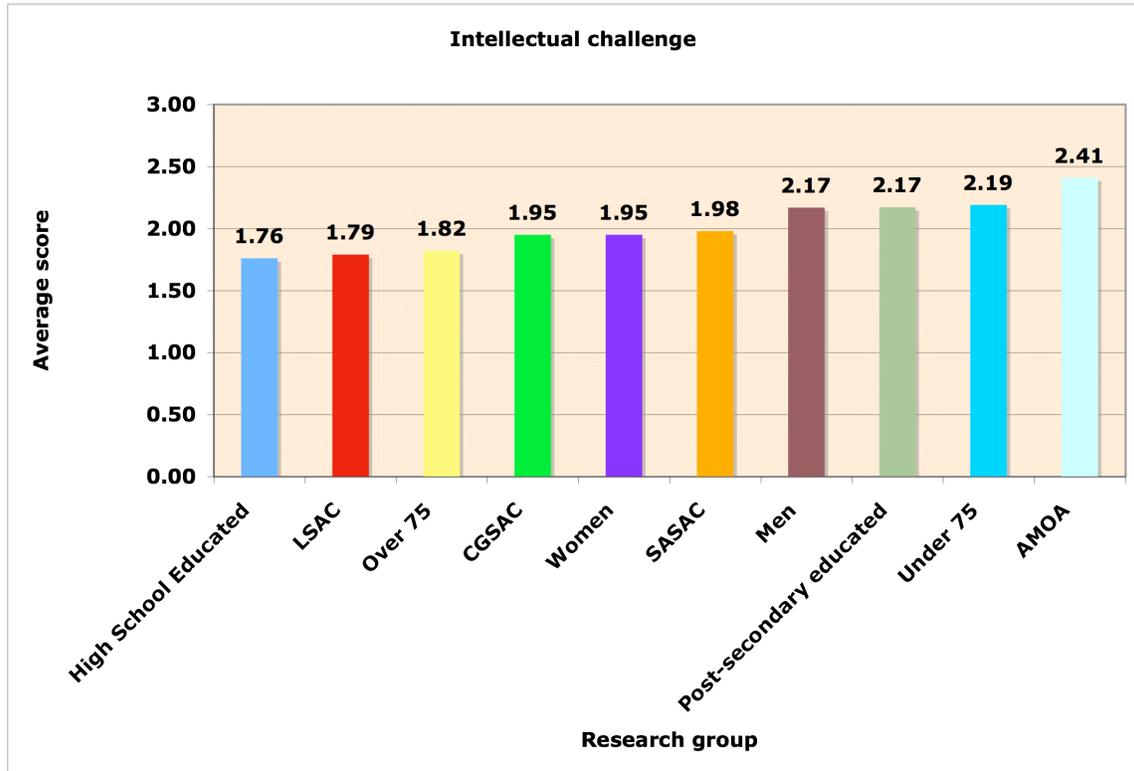


Figure 48. Popularity of the learning goal of intellectual challenge, based on average scores.

SENSE OF BELONGING

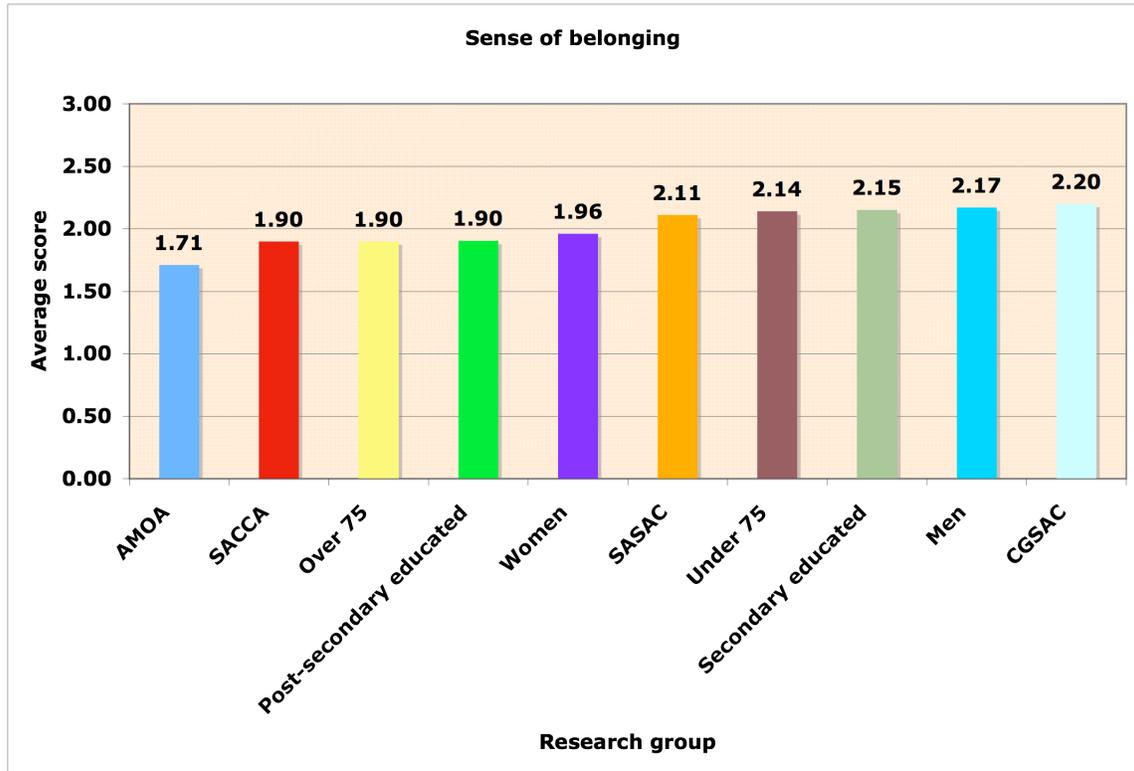


Figure 49. Popularity of the learning goal to foster a sense of belonging, based on average scores.

DEVELOP A PRE-EXISTING SKILL

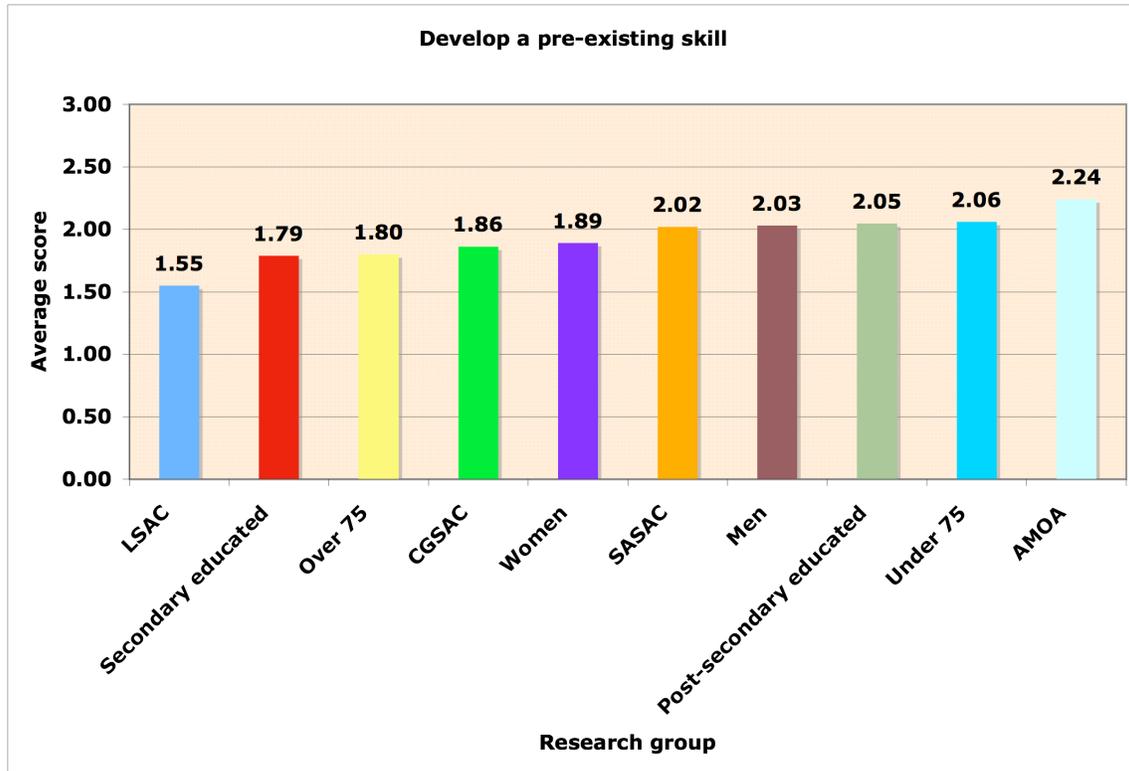


Figure 50. Popularity of the learning goal to develop a pre-existing skill, based on average scores.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

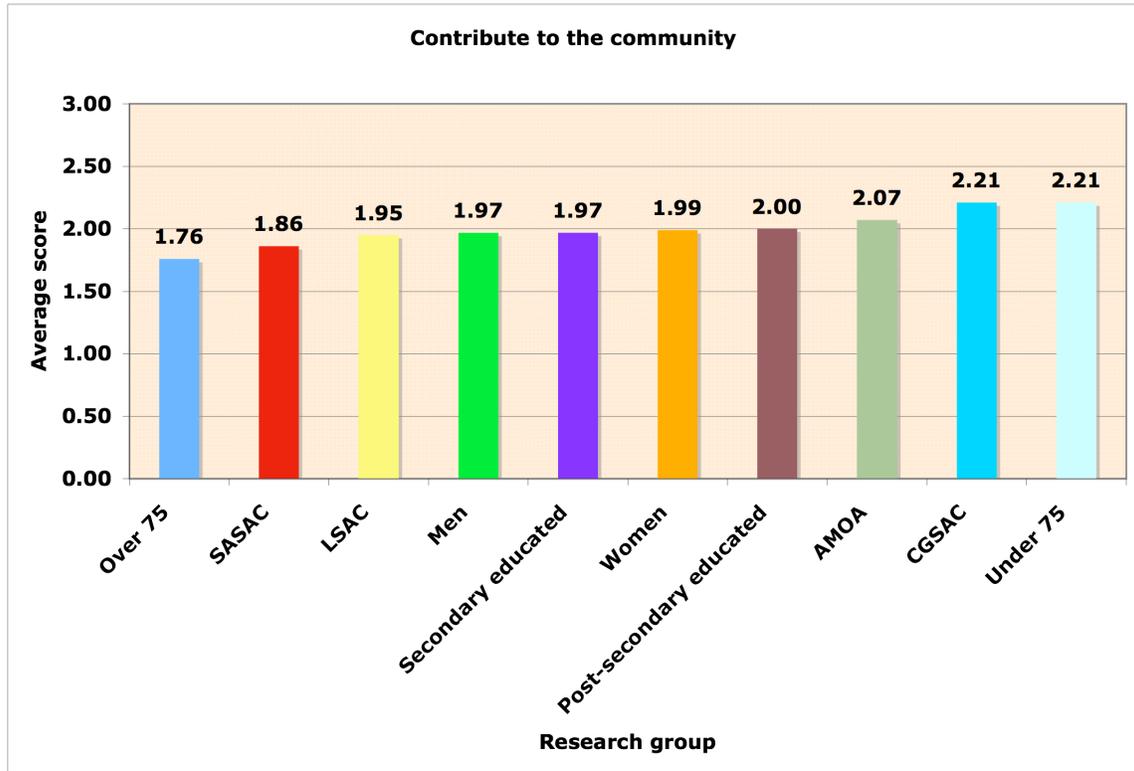


Figure 51. Popularity of the learning goal to contribute to the community, based on average scores.

SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH OTHERS

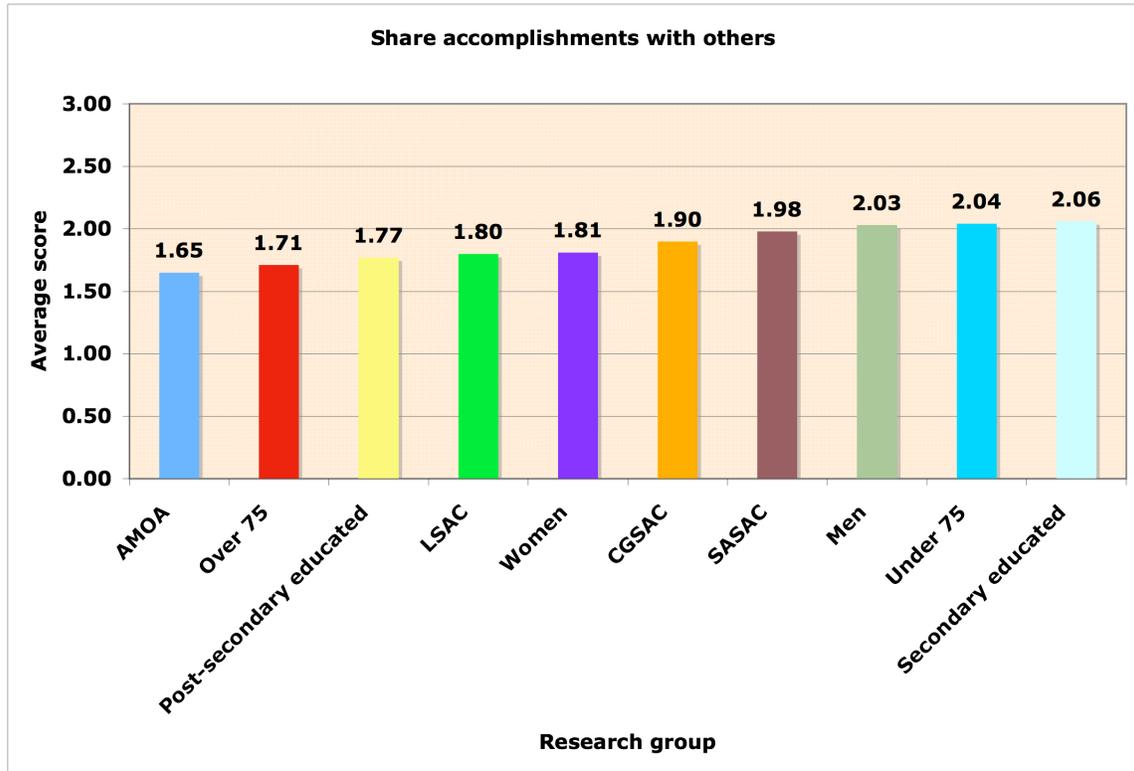


Figure 52. Popularity of the learning goal to share accomplishments with others, based on average scores.

LEARN A NEW SKILL

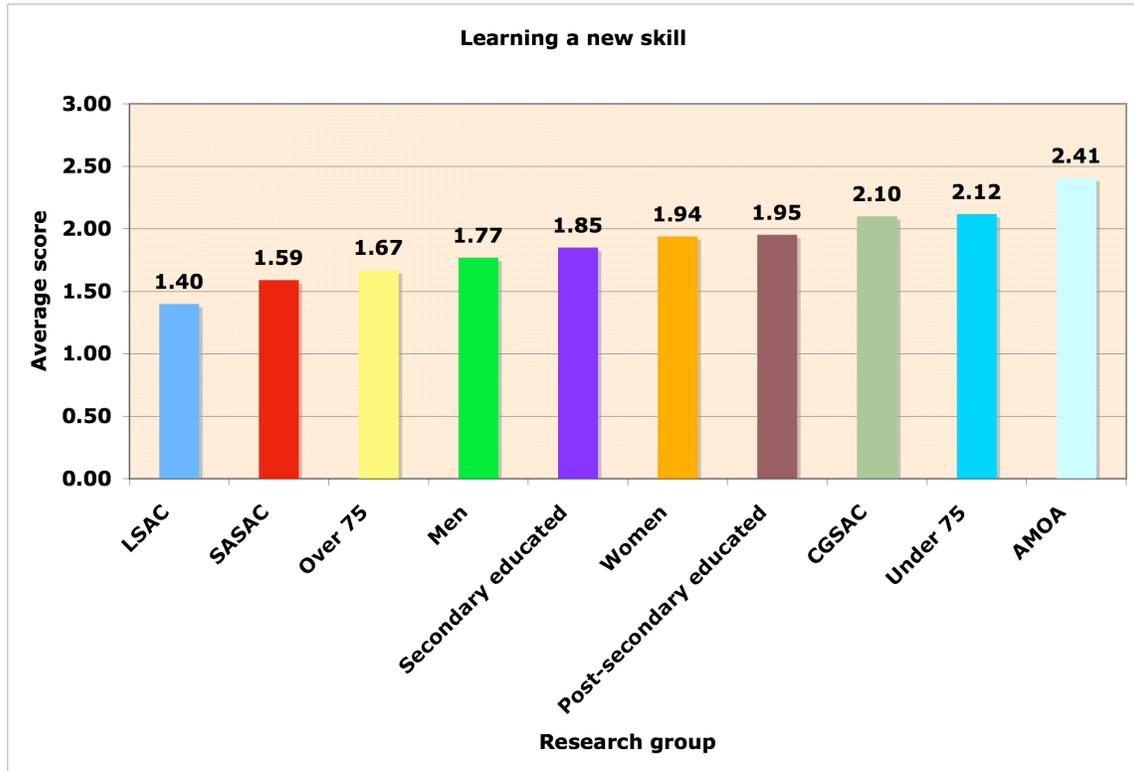


Figure 53. Popularity of the learning goal to learn a new skill, based on average scores.

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

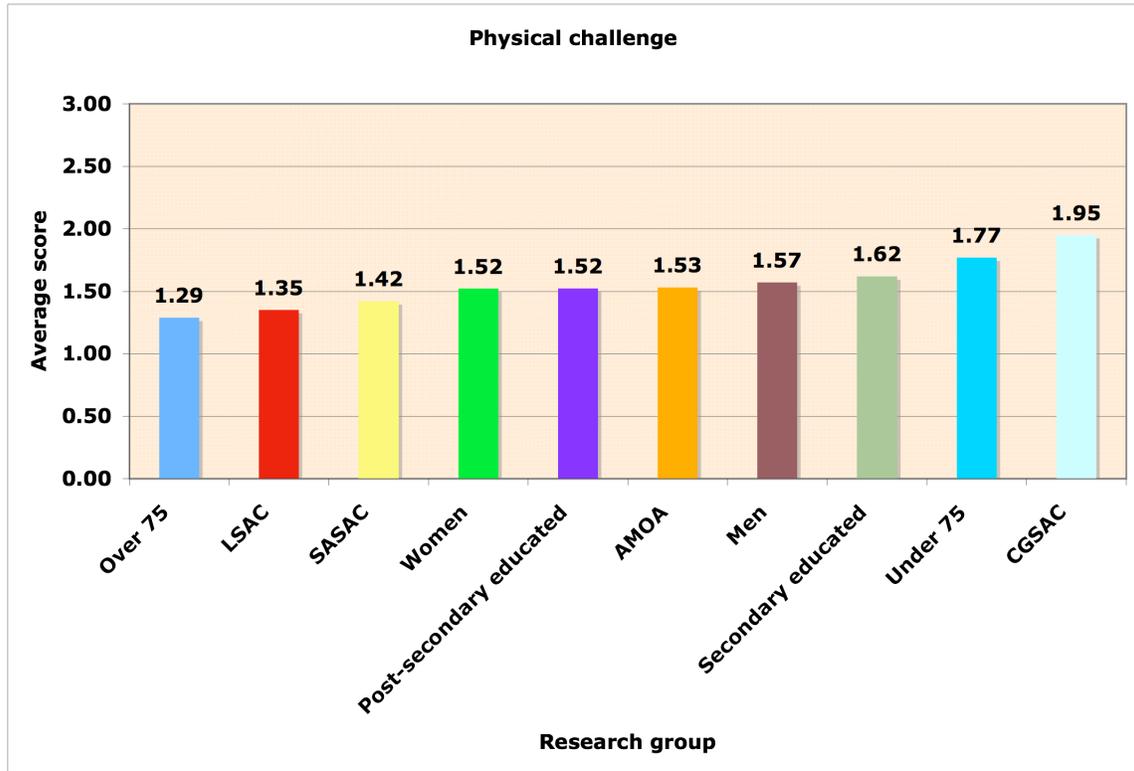


Figure 54. Popularity of the learning goal of physical challenge, based on average scores.

Appendix H: Participant Pool Characteristics Representation

GENDER REPRESENTATION

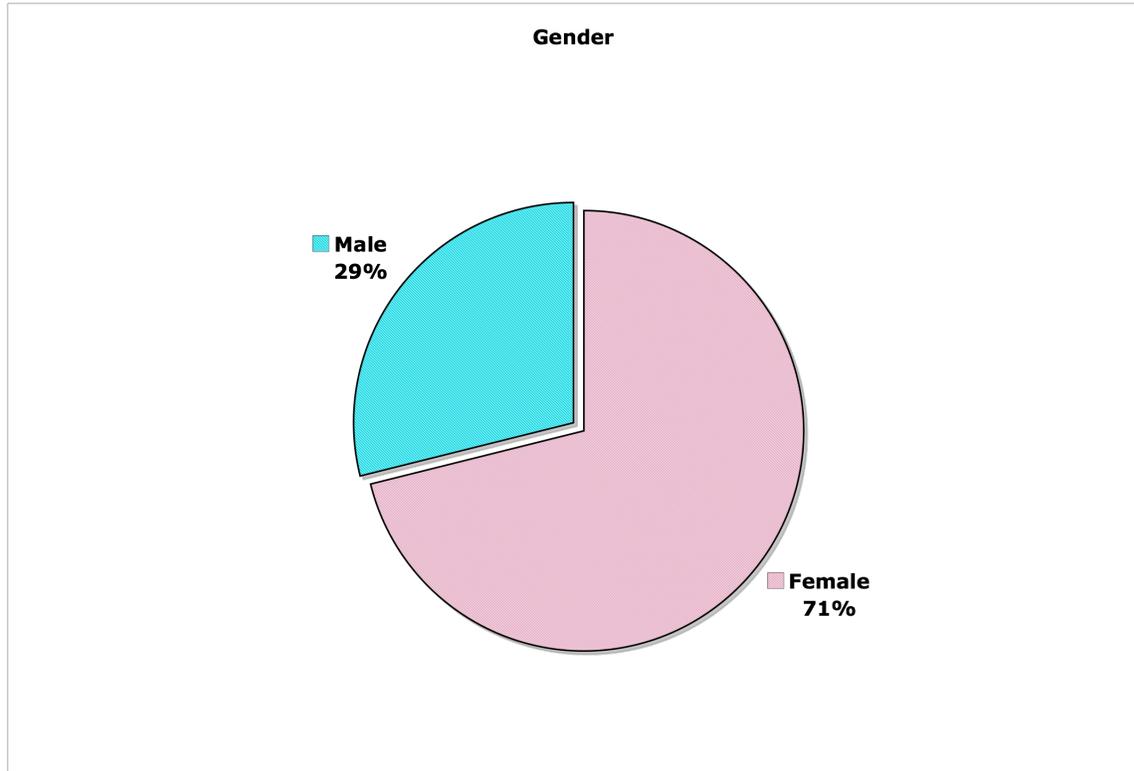


Figure 55. Gender Representation for all subjects.

AGE REPRESENTATION

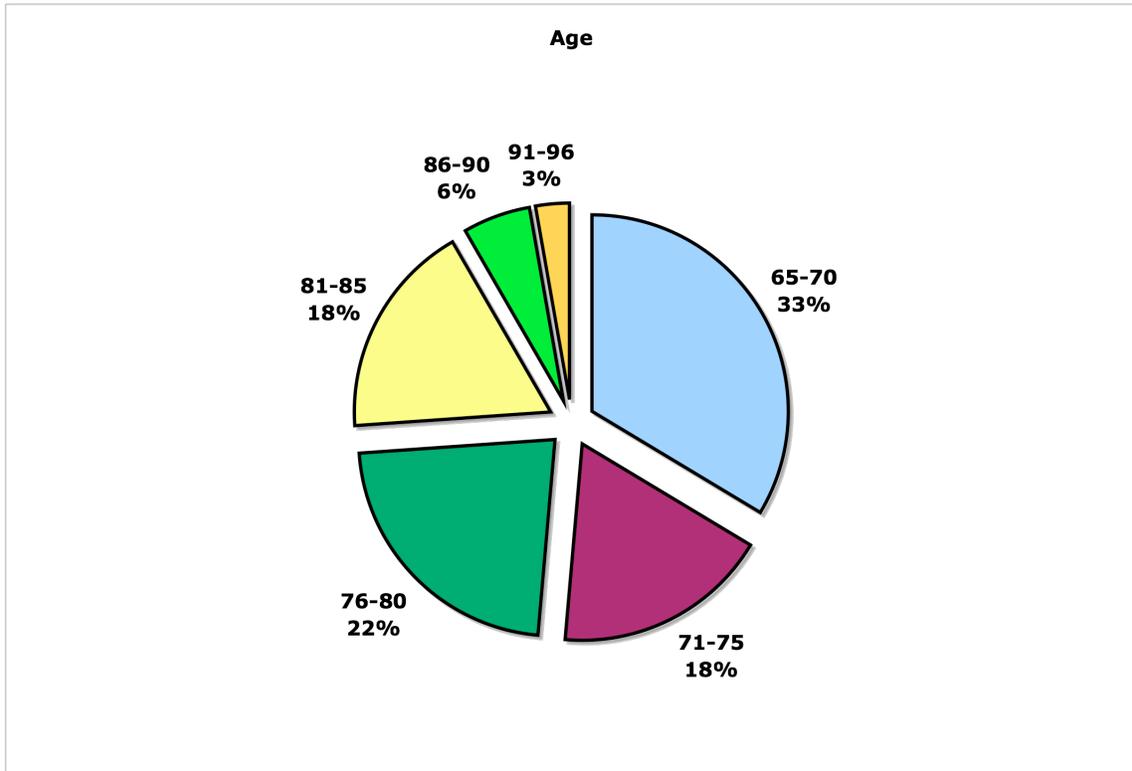


Figure 56. Age Representation for all subjects.

EDUCATION LEVELS

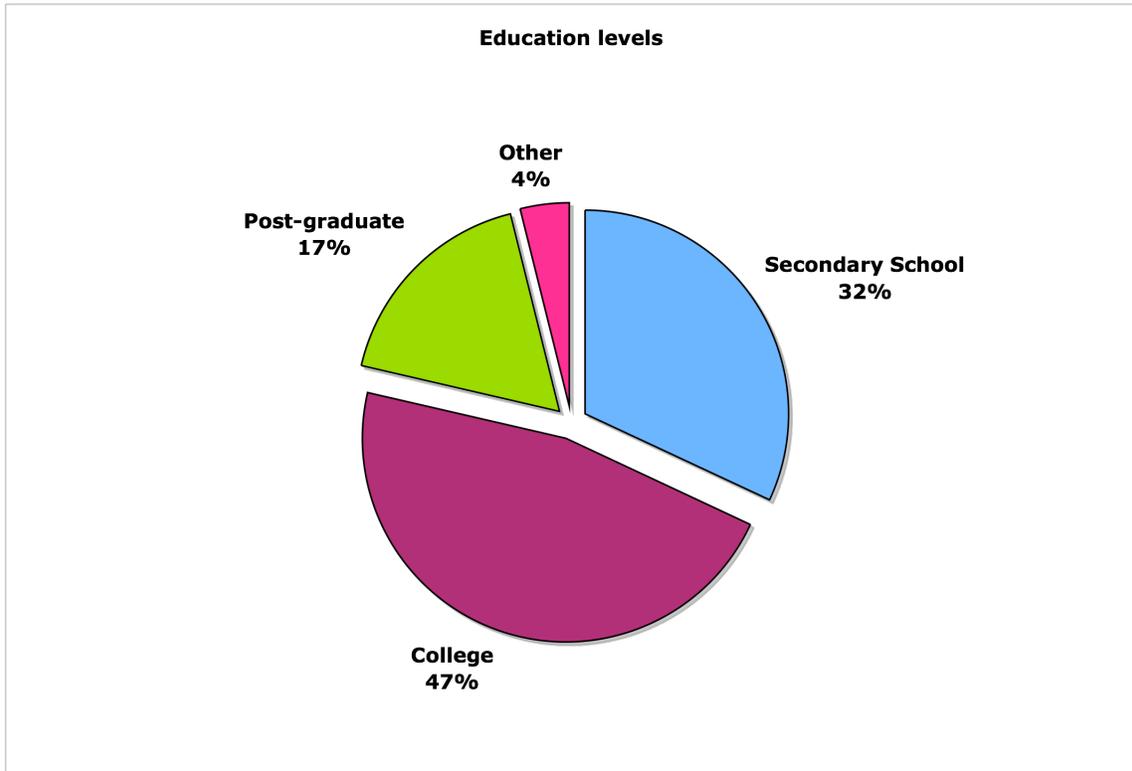


Figure 57. Education levels for all subjects.

REPRESENTATION FROM EACH SITE

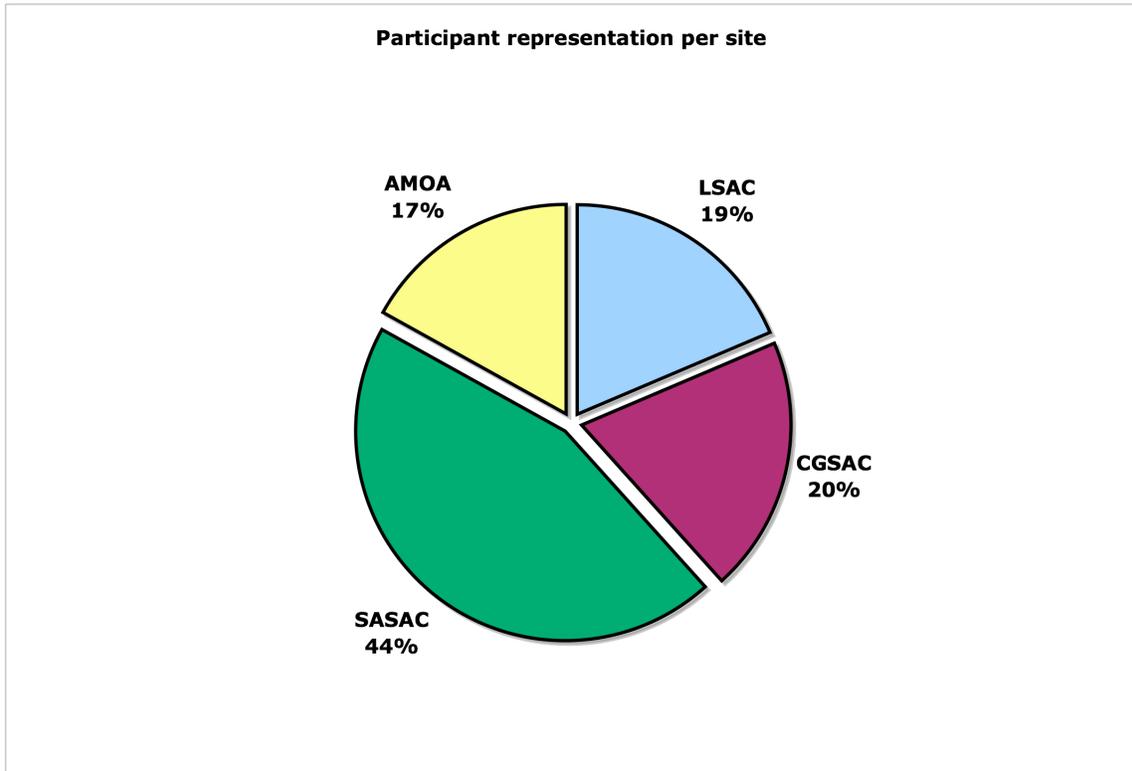


Figure 58. Participant representation from each site.

Appendix I: Internet Resources for Older Adult Art Educators

Older adult services and advocacy groups:

Administration on Aging

<http://www.aoa.gov/>

American Association of Retired People- Texas

<http://www.aarp.org/states/tx/>

Area Agency on Aging

<http://www.aaacap.org/>

Austin Groups for the Elderly

<http://www.ageofaustin.org/>

Center for Aging Health and the Humanities

<http://www.gwumc.edu/cahh/>

National Center for Creative Aging

<http://www.creativeaging.org/>

Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/>

Local older adult publications:

Austin Seniors' Guide

<http://www.seniorguide.net/>

Senior News (information available through Mature Publishers' website)

<http://www.maturepublishers.com/members/TX-SNA.html>

The Senior Advocate

<http://www.senioradvocateneeds.com/>

Programs for older adults:

Elderhostel Program affiliated with the University of Texas

<http://www.utexas.edu/cee/elderhostel/>

Senior Net

<http://www.seniornet.org/usa/austin/default.php?PageID=5236>

Travis County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.)

<http://www.rsvpaustin.org/>

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UT Austin

http://web.austin.utexas.edu/thirdage/3au/3au_home.cfm

Art studios/groups:

Austin Craft Mafia

<http://www.austincraftmafia.com/>

Austin Film Society

<http://www.austinfilm.org/>

Austin Museum of Digital Art

<http://www.amoda.org/>

Austin Shutterbug Photography Club

<http://www.austinshutterbug.com/>

Clayways

http://www.clayways.com/a_aboutus.html

Flatbed Press

<http://www.flatbedpress.com/>

Museums with older adult programs:

Art Institute Chicago, “Art Insights” & “Senior Celebration Days”

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/education/seniorprograms.html>

Carnegie Museum of Natural History, “Senior Express”

<http://www.carnegiemnh.org/doe/programs/express.htm>

National Czeck and Slovak Museum:, “Cooking in Babi’s Kitchen”

<http://www.ncsml.org/about/events&programs/calendar.htm>

National Gallery of Canada, “Inquiring Eye”

http://www.gallery.ca/english/default_56.htm

Center for Emerging Art Miami Beach, “Growing Up in Miami Beach”

http://centerforemergingart.org/_wsn/page2.html

Wichita Art Museum, “Senior Wednesdays”

<http://www.wichitaartmuseum.org/cgi-bin/>

<list/list.html?ID=calendar&template=Htx/calendar.htx>

Whitney Museum of American Art , “Senior Celebration Days” and “Senior Art

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