



INTERGENERATIONAL BENEFITS

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

I WISH I'D ASKED is an intergenerational programme which has multiple benefits for both the aged and the young. Benefits of this programme for the young include:

Connection

In the process of interviewing the seniors, the young will have many conversations with each other, their teachers and their senior buddies. They will hear each other's stories and possibly those from other schools. This will create relationships and bring people closer together. It will also create an opportunity for children who do not have grandparents to connect with a much older adult.

Respect

In hearing the stories, the young will come to understand that we all have a "story" and that we need to respect each other regardless of our backgrounds and ages.

Communication Skills

The process of designing and conducting an interview requires a combination of listening and speaking skills which are core components of the Language Curriculum.

Conversational Skills

This programme is focussed on the acquisition of conversational skills which will be required as key components for employers over the next twenty years. (A survey of Australian employers found that interpersonal skills (e.g. the ability to LISTEN, SPEAK and PRESENT INFORMATION) were the most important candidate attributes that they looked for during recruitment. BRIGHT FUTURES, VIC HEALTH (CSIRO) p.16)

Organisational Skills

The young will develop the skills of organising and preparing for an interview and presenting data collected through their interviews, into a coherent narrative, or story.

Problem Solving Abilities

Presenting the information in the form of a "finished product" requires skill and thought. The challenge is to present the life of their subject in a manner which is authentic, sympathetic to the subject and of interest to the viewer.

Positive Attitude Towards Ageing

The engagement with the seniors will help reduce inaccurate stereotypes towards ageing. The young come to understand through observing and connecting with, "real" older people that life has a course, or trajectory and they are on it.



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Sense of Purpose and Community Service

The young learn about the importance of relationships with the seniors in their community. With meaningful interaction and a sense of contributing to another's life, the young develop a sense of purpose. The young learn about their history through the seniors' real-life experiences. This storybuilding and shared experience helps to build their community and create an oral history for all to share.

Positive Self Esteem

The young will receive encouragement from the seniors, and they will derive a positive sense of self-worth knowing they are helping the seniors tackle loneliness and learn new skills.

Leadership and Citizenship Skills

Older youth can present their videos to younger members of the school to highlight the common elements and differences between the generations. They can then form a "buddy" system and mentor the younger ones to conduct their own interviews with a much older adult.

Empathy and Social Skills

The young learn how to interact with those much older than themselves. They are encouraged to show compassion, manners, patience and tolerance because the seniors may need extra assistance and time to complete shared activities. Interacting with people of all ages is an important social skill in life.

"Connections between generations are essential for the mental health and stability of a nation."

Margaret Mead (Bosak, Susan V, Benefits of Intergenerational Connections)

BENEFITS FOR SENIORS

A review in 2017 of intergenerational connections (Link 1) made the following conclusions:

- Intergenerational programs that involve direct contact and friendships, have the highest potential to improve attitudes
- Direct contact reduces loneliness and depression in older adults
- Positive attitudes gained through meaningful engagement, shared purpose and cooperation, can boost health outcomes in older adults - psychologically, emotionally, cognitively and physically
- Intergenerational friendships reduce ageist attitudes and behaviours - "...having at least one older friend can decrease stereotyping of older adults."
- Direct contact can improve perspective, that is the ability to see things from another person's viewpoint, in this case, an older adult, leads to more harmonious attitudes shared between the generations
- Understanding develops both ways (young-older; older-younger)



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The Griffith University “Intergenerational Care Project” (Link 2) identified these positive outcomes:

- Reciprocity in learning, for example reverse mentoring where the young can teach new skills to older adults, e.g. technology
- Older adults can teach the young new skills too, e.g. gardening and letter-writing
- Reminiscence and reflections - older adults reflect a lot on the meaning of life and their role in it and their place in the life of the young - this is a positive element which helps to create a sense of well-being
- Sharing wisdom with young people – “preservation of social capital” - this generative element assists older adults with a feeling of self-worth and making a continuing contribution
- Intergenerational friendships can help preserve the older adult's social role and relevance in the community
- Positive sense of well-being- happier, more confident and more optimistic through intergenerational connections
- Intergenerational learning programs can help to delay cognitive decline

LINKS TO REFERENCES

1. [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/Research/Making_Intergenerational_Connections-Evidence_Review\(2017\).pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/Research/Making_Intergenerational_Connections-Evidence_Review(2017).pdf)
2. <https://blogs.griffith.edu.au/business-school-research/department/business-strategy-innovation/2019/09/03/the-intergenerational-care-project-qa-open-forum-2019/>
3. <https://legacyproject.org/guides/intergenbenefits.html>
4. <https://www.bayshorehomecare.com/10-benefits-connecting-youth-seniors/>
5. <https://homecareassistance.com/blog/intergenerational-connections-benefit-old-young/>
6. <http://www.markmerrill.com/8-reasons-your-children-should-spend-time-with-the-elderly/>