

## The Present of Things Future: Reflections on Teaching About Aging to Students in Their Twenties

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**ABSTRACT.** Organized around three course objectives are six activities/assignments the author has found useful in promoting affective learning outcomes in introductory courses on aging. The intent in developing these approaches was to address particular postures toward aging and the aged often displayed by students in their late teens and early twenties. In addition to describing these activities and assignments, the author reflects on student feedback in terms of the promise these activities and assignments hold for enabling students to more clearly discern their personal futures as older adults, and for motivating them to make changes in their present lives that will ensure successful aging in the future.

Compared to the experience of teaching human development courses where the content centers on the first two decades of life, faculty who teach introductory undergraduate courses on aging often encounter student postures that require special pedagogical approaches. The term “postures” refers collectively to a host of beliefs and attitudes about aging and the aged. In this paper, I share some of these approaches in the form of class activities and assignments that students have said in retrospect were thought-provoking and impactful. These activities and assignments are organized around three course objectives: Future time perspective and personal futurity, ageism and expectations about aging, and life course variability resulting from socio-historical influences. Admittedly, these are not the only course objectives undergirding an introductory course on aging, but they represent objectives designed to promote affective learning outcomes and address particular postures held by many students who have not yet celebrated their 25th birthday.

### **Course Objective #1: Fostering a Sense of Personal Futurity**

The first course objective is to instill in students a sense of personal futurity wherein they are able to see more clearly their own trajectory of aging. This objective is intentionally presented first because it has primacy when I teach an introductory course on aging. I also opted to highlight it in the title of the paper by using the phrase “present of things future, which is taken from an observation once made by St. Augustine (in *Confessions*), “There are three times: a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.” The phrase, “present of things future”, was subsequently adopted by Thomas Cottle and Stephen Klineberg (1974) as the title of their classic exploration of time in human experience.

Although the focus of this paper is not exclusively on time perspective, “the present of things future” seems a fitting phrase for capturing much of what I often try to do in my introductory undergraduate courses on aging; that is, to use the present classroom experience and

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the present life situations of my students to foster a sense of personal futurity that extends into old age, and to subsequently use that sense of personal futurity to encourage students to make changes in present lifestyles and habits that will result in successful aging in the future (Rowe & Kahn, 1997).

Cottle and Klineberg (1974) observed that anticipating a personal future involves two central processes. First, one must be able to imagine events that have no concrete reality in the present. And second, one must confer a sense of reality on these images by attributing them to the realm of the possible. The capacity for mental imagery is an important and uniquely human trait, and one that the class activities outlined in this paper are intended to both foster and utilize.

Although the number of "non-traditional" age students in my courses has increased over the years, the majority are in their late teens or early twenties. As such, they initially tend to view a course on aging as something foreign to their life experience. And, parenthetically, because many of them have career interests centered on working with children and/or adolescents, the content of a course on aging is on the opposite end of the life span that has captured their career interest. They can personally relate to the content of human development courses covering the first two decades of life (e.g. infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood), but a course on aging addresses life terrain they have not yet traversed, and have seldom thought about traversing. Consequently, some of my students view their own aging as tantamount to fiction (probably an exaggeration); or if not fiction, then surely period of the life course that is so temporally distant from the present that they have not given it much thought. My students readily embrace the fact that others in their social world are old, or are growing old. They see themselves as grandchildren of elderly grandparents, or as children of parents who are aging, or even as professionals-in-the-making who will soon serve or work for or on behalf of older persons. But not often do they view aging in ways that apply to them personally.

In sharing the foregoing observations, I do not mean to imply that my students are devoid of a future time perspective or a sense of personal futurity. Such is not the case. Many are looking forward to completing a degree or starting a career. But for students in their late teens or early twenties, these future anticipations rarely extend to periods of midlife, and hardly ever to old age. My students have what Robert Kastenbaum (1963) called a sense of "cognitive futurity", but they lack a sense of "personal futurity". That is, they cognitively grasp the notion that life's trajectory includes a future that stretches from the present to death, but the midlife and later adulthood/old age segments of this trajectory are only sparsely populated with images, events, and transitions into which students personally project themselves.

The value of explicitly addressing the issue of future time perspective/personal futurity in an introductory course on aging resides in the assumption that, as a student's future time perspective expands and as they actively entertain notions of what life events they will encounter in the future and how they might cope with these events, the probability increases that students will see them as possibilities and become motivated to plan and prepare for future life transitions (Cottle & Klineberg, 1974). And the more intensely and emotionally they become engaged in thinking about their personal futures, the greater the probability that they will link the present to the future, and the future to the present. My hope here is that they will – as a result of more clearly discerning their future as older adults - engage now in habits and lifestyles changes that will result in successful aging in the future (Rowe & Kahn, 1997).

### **Images of Aging: "Window" or "Mirror"?**

In an effort to foster a sense of personal futurity, I developed an activity dubbed, Images of Aging: "Window" or "Mirror"?. On the second day of class, I present a slideshow of images of older persons. The slideshow varies every year as I add and remove images, but I always strive to incorporate variation in terms of gender, age, race and ethnic background, socio-economic circumstances, marital status, health, frailty, activity level, geographical location, residential setting, etc. As the images are projected, I ask students to write down descriptors (words or phrases) that to come mind, in a "stream-of-consciousness" sort of way. After students have completed this task, I ask them to assign a "valence" to each descriptor; that is, to indicate whether they consider each descriptor to be positive, negative, or neutral. Subsequent class discussion centers on the descriptors recorded, the valences assigned, and the reasons for viewing each descriptor as positive, negative, or neutral. I also ask students to write down one word that they feel summarizes the collage of images they have viewed.

Then I ask a key question: Did the images serve as a "mirror" of their personal future? Or simply as a "window" through which they saw the aging or agedness of others? In a class of 100 enrolled students, it has not been unusual for only 3 or 4 (mostly non-traditional age students) to say that the images triggered thoughts about their own aging. For most students in their late teens or twenties, the images do not spawn thoughts of personal aging or futurity.

Students are then asked to make another list of descriptors as they view the images for a second time, but with their own aging or agedness as the primary referent; that is, they are asked to view the images as if they were an older person (say, age 75 or older). For each descriptor they record the second time, I ask them to again assign a positive, negative, or neutral valence. Ensuing class discussion addresses changes in assigned valences, and an exploration of the sources of attitudes about aging. I specifically try to "draw out" expectations students have with regard to growing old. Although it is sometimes difficult, I try to ensure that the discussion remains centered on personal aging, and does not veer toward talking about older people in general, or about other older persons in the students' lives (e.g. their grandparents).

As this activity concludes, I emphasize that we are all aging, and that the content of the course, while applicable to those around them who are aging or aged, will focus on their own experience as aging individuals; their futures as older people. I state that I will be their "tour guide" as we explore their personal futures using as a "map" some of the current research on adult development and aging. Almost every segment of the course thereafter is framed from the perspective of the student's own aging and personal future as an older or aging person. When we discuss age-related cognitive changes, for example, I try to anchor course discussion to their own lives rather than talking about older persons in general. When we address topics such as widowhood, or grandparenting, or generativity at midlife, I try to steer discussion toward how these topics might be experienced in their own lives in the future, rather than how they apply to "others" at the present time.

In course evaluations, it is not uncommon for students to indicate that participating in this activity was the first time they had given prolonged and contemplative thought to the fact that they would one day be old. Some students have also written to me years afterward and shared that this activity - and indeed the entire class experience - prompted them to re-evaluate their lifestyles and ways of coping with transitions such that they made permanent changes with the goal of enjoying a higher quality of life in old age.

### **Course Objective #2: Addressing Ageism, Stereotypes, and Expectations**

The second course objective focuses on helping students to recognize and more closely examine personal values and attitudes concerning aging and the aged. The important link between Objective #2 and Objective #1 is that students' images regarding their personal futures are often influenced by present attitudes and age stereotypes. Class discussions in the "window or mirror" activity described under Objective #1 reveal that, at least for some students, a parent's fear of aging and/or a grandparent's frail and failing health has led them (i.e., the students) to view their own aging with some apprehension, or to view older persons in stereotypical ways. The youth-oriented culture in which we live also creates in the minds of many of my students the expectation that the latter half of life will primarily be fraught with loss and decreased social value, that they will after a certain age head into a downhill spiral that ends in "second childishness and mere oblivion, Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII, see Crowther, 2004). To address this student posture (i.e., negative stereotypes about aging and the aged), I use the following four activities, all of which are based on survey instruments reported in the literature on ageism.

#### **Palmore's Ageism Survey**

Items in the Palmore Ageism Survey (Palmore, 2001) include examples of ageism in terms of stereotypes, attitudes, and personal/institutional discrimination. Sample items include: "I was rejected as unattractive because of my age" and "I was ignored or not taken seriously because of my age". Students indicate how often they have experienced each event (Never = 0; Once = 1; More than once = 2). Sometime during the first two weeks of the semester, I ask students to complete the Ageism Survey twice; once for themselves (at their current age), and again for a relative or friend who is age 70 or older (often done via phone or email). When completed, students compare their ageism responses with those of the older relative or friend. Subsequent class discussion (most often in small groups) centers on differences and similarities in responses. If time permits, I also share some of Palmore's research findings wherein he had expected that older respondents would report more ageism than younger persons, but reported no differences. Lastly, students are asked to complete the survey for their "future self" at age 70, and subsequent class discussion centers on how social expectations might contribute to ageism.

A closing point I make is that the Ageism Survey does not ask people to admit that they themselves have engaged in ageist acts, only to report on ageist acts that others have done to them. I remind students to be aware of their own ageism, and have sometimes assigned the task of describing instances when they have displayed ageism toward others. Because all of the items in the Ageism Survey deal with "negative ageism", I also find it useful to ask students to identify examples of "positive ageism" items that could be included.

#### **The Aging Opinion Survey**

After students have completed Palmore's Ageism Survey, I ask them to also complete the Aging Opinion Survey (Kafer, Rakowski, Lachman, & Hickey, 1980). Three of the four authors of the Aging Opinion Survey (AOS) were fellow graduate students at the Pennsylvania State University in the 1970s, and I was involved in several discussions with them during the development of the Survey. One of the intriguing and unique aspects of the AOS (and consequently a key reason for its value as an activity supporting Objective #2) is that the Survey distinguishes between attitudes toward the elderly and those toward the aging process as it applies to the respondent. Of three sub-scales in the AOS, I use two: the Personal Anxiety Toward Aging sub-scale (item example: "I dread the day when I can no longer get around on my own"), and the Social Value of the Elderly sub-scale (item example: "Youthful enthusiasm and

fresh ideas count for more in today's world than the outdated notions of older people"). I do not ask students to respond to items on the Stereotypic Age-Decrement sub-scale.

After students have initially completed the two sub-scales and computed scores, I ask them to form small groups, compare their responses to items in the Personal Anxiety Toward Aging sub-scale (lower scores are indicative of higher personal anxiety), and discuss reasons for their personal anxieties about aging. Then, again in small groups, they compare responses to the Social Value of the Elderly sub-scale, and discuss reasons for attitudes regarding the social value of the elderly. Lastly, students are asked to complete the "Social Value of the Elderly" sub-scale again, but this time from the perspective of being age 70 themselves. Subsequent small group discussion centers on differences between their first set of responses and the latter set.

### **The Expectations Regarding Aging Survey**

The Expectations Regarding Aging Survey (ERA) was developed by Sarkisian, Hays, Berry, and Magione (2002). Unlike some ageism surveys, the ERA is not designed to measure positive or negative attitudes toward older persons, but rather to quantify the extent to which respondents expect to experience age-associated declines in ten different areas (e.g., cognitive function, mental health, appearance). I administer the ERA to students during the first two weeks of class, and again near the end of the semester. Very little discussion is involved in the first administration of the instrument. I simply ask them to keep it until the end of the course. When students have completed the Survey the second time, I have them retrieve the ERA they completed at the beginning of the semester. In small groups, students then compare and discuss differences in responses between the first administration of the ERA and the second administration.

### **The Aging Semantic Differential Scale**

With the possible exception of the Maxwell-Sullivan Attitude Scale (Maxwell & Sullivan, 1980), the Aging Semantic Differential Scale by Rosencrantz and McNevin (1969) is one of the instruments most often used to assess attitudes toward aging among students. Unlike the ERA mentioned in the previous class activity, the Aging Semantic Differential Scale is intended to assess both negative and positive attitudes toward aging. Students are presented with a list of 32 polar adjectives pairs, each configured on a 7-point scale. Students are asked to place a check mark along the scale indicating how they would view two "social objects": themselves at age 75, and persons in general who are age 75. Examples of polar adjective pairs include: busy-idle; hopeful-dejected; happy-sad; tolerant-intolerant; decisive-indecisive. I administer the Aging Semantic Differential Scale twice, once at the beginning of the semester, and again at the end of the term. After the second administration, I ask students to form small groups and compare/discuss differences in responses between the first administration of the Semantic Differential Scale and the second administration. I ask them to discuss the extent to which their experience in class has changed their future views of themselves as older persons, and toward older persons in general.

Student feedback on course evaluations indicates that the aforementioned activities serve as a useful catalyst in spawning thought and discussion regarding attitudes toward aging as a process, and toward the aged as a group. Most importantly, student report that these activities made them think more carefully about how they feel about their own aging. Particularly helpful in this regard – from the student's perspective - is the Personal Anxiety Toward Aging sub-scale of the Aging Opinion Survey.

### **Course Objective #3: Highlighting Life Course Variability**

The third and final course objective shared in this paper is to help students see more clearly that the life course is not fixed, but that it varies widely as a result of many factors, including social and historical influences. This objective also includes helping students to understand that variability in the life course applies not only to different birth cohorts represented in the general population, but also to the multigenerational family systems in which they are imbedded.

If it is their first course on aging, I have found that many students come to class the first day believing that the modal trajectory of middle adulthood through old age follows an immutable pattern or fixed trajectory, frequently characterized more by loss and decline than by growth and development. Similarly, students are largely unaware that social and historical factors produce variation in the way aging is experienced by different birth cohorts and by different generations within a family system. To address this posture, I developed the following activity.

#### **Life Course Comparisons of Different Generations in an Extended Family System**

In illustrating how social and historical change results in variation in the life course experiences of persons representing different birth cohorts, Matilda White Riley once described a model of cohort succession: "It is useful to visualize this model schematically as a series of horizontal bars, staggered across the axis of historical time. Each bar represents a cohort of people all born during the same time period. Within each cohort, people are aging; socially as well as biologically and psychologically; moving through roles; accumulating knowledge, attitudes, experiences. In the meantime new cohorts are continually succeeding one another. This seemingly obvious schematic representation has the distinct use of forcing us to keep in mind that each cohort cuts off a unique segment of historical time; confronts its own particular sequence of social and environmental events. That is, because society changes, the modal life-course patterns of people in different cohorts cannot be precisely alike." (Riley, 1974, p. 41).

To help students better understand that the experience of aging is not the same for all cohorts due to the influence of socio-historical factors, I used Riley's model as the basis for creating an activity and class assignment wherein students compare the life course trajectories and experiences of three persons representing different generations within the student's own extended family system: a grandparent, a parent, and the student. The activity is launched by having students first read and discuss the following quote by Norman Ryder (1977, p. 843): "Each cohort cuts off a unique segment of historical time — confronts its own particular sequence of social and environmental events. That is, because society changes, the modal life-course patterns of people in different cohorts cannot be precisely alike...Because of social and historical change, different cohorts age in different ways."

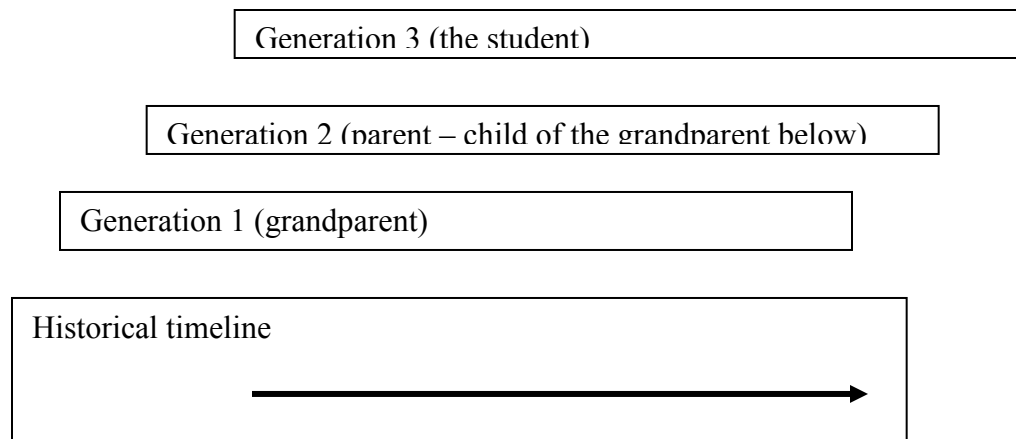
After a class discussion regarding the terms "cohort" and "generation" (Bengtson, 1975), students are given an historical timeline dating from 1900 to the present. Printed in landscape orientation on two legal-size sheets of paper taped end-to-end, this timeline includes decade-specific highlights gleaned from historical almanacs (e.g., Rosenberg, 2011). Figure 1 contains an example of timeline segments for two different decades: 1900-1909 and 2000-2009.

Figure 1: Examples of two “decade segments” from an historical timeline

<b>1900-1909</b>	Kodak introduces \$1 Brownie cameras; Max Planck’s Quantum Theory; Sigmund Freud publishes <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>	<b>1900</b>
 <p>Model-T, First Flight, San Francisco Earthquake, Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, Boxer Rebellion, First Silent Movie</p>	First Nobel Prizes are awarded; First trans-Atlantic radio signal; President McKinley is assassinated	<b>1901</b>
	Boer War ends; The teddy bear is introduced; U.S. passes the Chinese Exclusion Act	<b>1902</b>
	First flight at Kitty Hawk by Wright brothers; First message to travel around the world; First silent movie; First baseball world series; plague in India	<b>1903</b>
	First popular American film; Ground broken on the Panama Canal; New York City subway opens; Russo-Japanese War begins; Trans-Siberian railway is completed	<b>1904</b>
	“Bloody Sunday” – Russian Revolution of 1905; Einstein proposes his Theory of Relativity; Freud publishes his theory of sexuality	<b>1905</b>
	The Dreadnought is launched; Finland is first European country to give women the right to vote; Kellogg’s starts selling corn flakes; San Francisco earthquake; Upton Sinclair writes <i>The Jungle</i>	<b>1906</b>
	Ten Rules of War established at the Second Hague Peace Conference; First electric washing machine; Picasso introduces cubism; Typhoid Mary is captured for the first time	<b>1907</b>
	Earthquake in Italy kills 150,000; Ford introduces the Model-T; Three-year-old Pu Yi becomes emperor of China; Turks revolt in the Ottoman Empire	<b>1908</b>
	Japan’s Prince Ito is assassinated; NAACP is founded;	<b>1909</b>
	Plastic is invented; Robert Peary becomes the first to reach the North Pole	
. . . .		
<b>2000-2009</b>	Human genome is deciphered; U.S. commits to help Africa fight AIDS; Vermont becomes the first state recognizing same-sex unions; U.S. offers new tactic on global warming.	<b>2000</b>
 <p>Terrorism, Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Stem Cell Controversy, Human Genome Mapped</p>	9-11 Al Qaeda terrorists hijack 4 commercial airliners & crash 3 of them into the World Trade Center & the Pentagon, killing nearly 3,000 people; US subsequently declares a war on terrorism; hunt for Osama bin Laden.	<b>2001</b>
	The International Criminal Court (ICC) is established on July 1; A series of bombings carried out by Islamic militants kill 202 people at the resort of Kuta, Bali, Indonesia; Global spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	<b>2002</b>
	The U.S.-led coalition invades Iraq and overthrows the government of Saddam Hussein; Space Shuttle Columbia disaster; Chinese space program launches its first manned space flight; European heat wave kills approximately 30,000 people	<b>2003</b>
	Hurricane Jeanne; On December 26, 2004, a massive undersea earthquake results in a massive tsunami striking southeast Asia, killing approximately 230,000; North Korea conducts its first nuclear test; terrorist bombs in Mumbai	<b>2004</b>
	Hurricane Katrina kills 1,836 in southeast Louisiana and Mississippi (mostly in New Orleans). A significant portion of the city, most of which sits below sea level, is submerged; The first successful partial face transplant is performed in France.	<b>2005</b>
	Ian Frazer develops vaccine for cervical cancer; Israel-Lebanon conflict	<b>2006</b>
	China launches its first lunar mission with the Change 1 on October 24; The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) releases its Fourth Assessment Report (Global Warming)	<b>2007</b>
	Beginning of global economic recession; Armed conflict in August 2008 between Georgia and the Russian Federation; Israel launches a military campaign on the Gaza Strip due to continuous shelling of Israeli cities by radical elements of the Hamas	<b>2008</b>
	Inauguration of first African American president, Barack Obama; North Korea tests a Nuclear bomb; Worldwide outbreak of Influenza A virus subtype H1N1; Global economic recession continues	<b>2009</b>

Students are also given three strips of paper depicting the lifespan trajectories of three persons representing different generations within a family system: a grandparent, a parent and the student. From left to right, each strip is "ruled" for a 100-year lifespan, with shaded segments indicating nine life-cycle periods: infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, late childhood, early adolescence, late adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and later adulthood. The chronological metric (i.e., the width of the space representing one calendar year) on each strip is the same as the metric on the historical timeline. Students record the first name and the year of birth for one grandparent (preferably one who is still living) at the top of the first strip, and tape it onto the historical time line so that the grandparent's year of birth is aligned with the corresponding year on the timeline. This is repeated twice more; once for the student's parent who is the child of the grandparent previously identified (i.e. the parent life course strip is taped above and parallel to the grandparent life course strip), and again for the student (taped above and parallel to the parent life course strip). The end result is a stair-stepped configuration of three life course trajectories staggered across the axis of historical time, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Comparing the life course of three generations within a family



Students then select several periods of the life course (one of which I indicate must be later adulthood) and - based on information collected via phone or face-to-face interviews with the parent or grandparent (or both) - subsequently analyze and discuss similarities and differences regarding how periods of the life course have been (or might be) experienced differently across the three individuals among the generations. How, for example, was the experience of middle adulthood different for the selected grandparent versus the parent? How might the student's future experience of later adulthood and old age differ from that experienced by their parent and grandparent? When identifying differences, students are encouraged to explore the ways in which social and historical events/changes have uniquely influenced the life experiences of the three individuals. On some occasions, I have found it helpful to have students read some of Elder's work on children of the Great Depression (Elder, 1974) in advance of this assignment.

### **Reflections on Intergenerational Understanding**

In reflecting on the last activity and the comments students have recorded on course evaluations, I share some thoughts about developing empathy for persons representing older generations. Klemer and Smith (1975) once noted that empathy may be conceptualized as being either emotional or cognitive. Emotional empathy is the understanding and appreciation that one person or generation has for another that is derived not from shared experiences, but from simulated or vicarious experiences and generalizations of human behavior. Although the ideal would be to have all generations – including the generation(s) represented by students in my class - to be able to feel emotional empathy for others, this is probably not a realistic expectation. To a certain extent, role convergence provides the basis for some shared experiences among generations. A son develops greater emotional empathy for his father as a parent when he, the son, becomes a parent. But there is a time lag in the development of this empathy. At any given point, the shifting statuses and responsibilities or social roles throughout the life course may result in attitudinal and behavioral differences among those representing different periods of the life course. In fact, during periods of rapid social change, it may not even be possible to successfully bridge generational differences through role convergence. As Bengtson and Black



(1973) once observed, the interaction between a constantly changing socio-historical milieu and ontogeny minimizes the possibility of generalizing the experiences of adult life from one generation to another, which was one of the key point Matilda White Riley was trying to emphasize in her model of cohort succession (Riley, 1978).

The experience of young adulthood for students in my introductory courses on aging is in many ways far different from what it was for their parents several decades ago. Similarly, the mid-life experiences of today's parents (i.e., the parents of my students) may be very different from the midlife encounters their sons and daughters will have in the future. Since the nature of intergenerational differences makes it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve an empathic understanding among the generations at an emotional level, the learning outcome expected from the last activity I described is probably some degree of cognitive empathy rather than emotional empathy.

Perhaps the best example of what I mean by cognitive empathy is found in a piece written by Joe Britton, one of my former professors at the Pennsylvania State University. Professor Britton's plea was that an important responsibility or task in teaching young adults about aging is to encourage them to both understand and appreciate those generations which have preceded them in the life course (Britton, 1977). To understand another generation is to be able to grasp the meaning and comprehend the inner significance of the course as it was and is experienced by members of that generation. To appreciate another generation is a function of understanding, but it is more than simply having the facts at hand or comprehending them. Appreciation for another generation involves a comprehension that reflects a certain amount of esteem and respect.

### **Conclusion**

Shortly before I started my doctoral program at Penn State many years ago, one of the faculty there, Professor Bill Looft, passed away at a young age. I recall feeling disappointed that I would not be able to study with him. During my master's program, I had read an insightful article written by Looft wherein he expressed the concern that the bulk of our intervention efforts favored cognitive development at the expense of affective development (Loft, 1973). He questioned whether intellectual competence should be considered the "most hallowed" of all human attributes and suggested that it may be a mistaken notion to assume that improving cognitive competence is the key to improving the quality of life. Ageism and other forms of prejudice, he observed, still take a tragic toll on human well-being in spite of large doses of psychological intervention aimed at improving intellectual abilities. Looft's (1973) proposal was that we should "create intervention strategies that place greatest emphasis on producing a more cooperative, a more compassionate, a happier kind of people" (p. 8).

Looft's observations had a significant and long-term impact on my approach to teaching. Although in his article Professor Looft was primarily addressing interventions aimed at older adults, I saw in his work implications for the classroom where the target audience included students in their late teens and early twenties. From my earliest days as a university faculty member, I have pondered Looft's concern and proposal, and have continuously tried to think of and experiment with pedagogical approaches that emphasize affective as well as cognitive learning outcomes. The activities and assignments described in this paper are a few of the approaches I have developed as a result of this continual pondering and experimentation. Student feedback seems to indicate that they have been effective, not necessarily in making students more compassionate or happier, but rather in helping them to become more aware of how their

present actions and lifestyles will impact their personal futures as older adults, and motivating them to prepare in the present to enjoy successful aging in the future.

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### **Clifton Barber Bio**

Professor Barber earned a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies from the Pennsylvania State University, an M.S. in Child Development and Family Relations from Brigham Young University, and a B.A. in Sociology from Portland State University. As a doctoral student, he was awarded a traineeship funded by the National Institute on Aging, which included an internship at the Philadelphia Geriatric Center. He also received a research fellowship in applied gerontology from the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. Professor Barber is a long-time member of the American Society on Aging, and holds fellow status in the Gerontological Society of America (Social Research, Policy, and Practice Section). He has been a faculty member and an administrator at both Colorado State University and Washington State University, and helped develop and launch an online master's degree in gerontology through the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance. Currently, Professor Barber is a member of the faculty in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he also serves as a specialist on aging for UW Extension Family Living Programs and as the Associate Dean for Outreach and Extension in the School of Human Ecology. This paper is based on a workshop Professor Barber presented at an annual meeting of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education when he received the Association's Distinguished Teaching Award.