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Abstract

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Handmade Wellbeing in Elderly Care

The aim of this study is to investigate, how the elderly in care homes experience guided craft workshops. Many recent studies have investigated how engaging in craft activities effects the wellbeing of hobbyists, mainly from the perspective of women in good physical condition living in their own homes. In this study, the focus is on the elderly living in a care home or attending a day care center. The purpose of craft activities is seen as one way to foster their wellbeing. The research question is: *How do the elderly experience guided craft activities in elderly care?* Craft activities in elderly care are little studied; for craft studies, this is a relatively new but nevertheless an important and topical field because the population is aging everywhere in the world.

The data is gathered from the workshops which are arranged in two cycles in a care home in Finland in 2016. The workshops are part of the applied teaching practice of craft teacher education at the University of Helsinki; the instructors of the workshops are craft student teachers conducting their practice. The data is collected in contextual interviews with the elderly during the craft workshops to capture their authentic experiences. Each participant is interviewed on several occasions and the interviews are video recorded. The analysis concentrates on both bodily and verbal expressions.

This paper presents the preliminary findings of the data from the first cycle of the workshops, arranged in spring 2016. The results broaden the knowledge about the relationship of crafts and wellbeing: the purpose is to create a model for using crafts to promote wellbeing in social and welfare sectors.

Keywords

Craft workshop, wellbeing, elderly care, craft teacher education, video analysis