

Book review in *Review*, Ohio Psychological Association, November/December 2011

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*Enhancing Cognitive Fitness in Adults: A Guide to the Use and Development of Community-Based Programs*, Paula E. Hartman-Stein, Asenath La Rue, Editors.

As a member of GPAA, the Graying of Psychologists of America Association, and experiencing some cognitive slippage myself, the first thing I did when I read this book was to take notes for myself. I soon found myself thinking about my own work primarily among the elderly, and drawing inspiration and wisdom from the many contributors to this book about enhancing cognitive fitness among older adults.

The 499 page book is a compilation of 27 chapters written by 62 contributors and is divided into five parts. The first five chapters are dedicated to memory enhancing strategies and outline how these are confirmed or not by research results. An upshot of these chapters is that vigorous exercise is a very robust component to any good cognitive fitness program and that consumer based brain-training products show limited lasting generalization to other memory and learning situations. The chapters of the second part explain 11 different community-based programs designed to enhance cognitive well-being and sustain healthy aging. This is the fun part describing how creative sorts like the editors themselves and many others have found ways to engage elders in creative and stimulating ways that buffer the effects of cognitive decline and improve quality of life. These programs draw on the imaginative and socially situated power of creative writing, life review, competitive problem solving and life-long learning under the rubrics of Keys to a Sharp Mind (K2SM), Senior Odyssey, Montana Lifelong Learning Institute (MOLLI) and more. Similarly, Part III's four chapters focus on enhancing cognition through the arts with very interesting and evocative programs that engage seniors in very creative ways such as acting, song-writing, painting, visual arts and dance. Each of the programs outlined Part II and Part III allude to research or anecdotal reports on the beneficial cognitive effects reported by participants and supported by significant findings. Since I work with many individuals with dementia, I like the emphasis in Part IV on cognitive wellness interventions for adults with memory impairments featuring memory clubs, Montessori-based interventions with persons with dementia, and intergenerational educational settings. Finally, the last two chapters that comprise Part V discuss gaining through giving back, programs with a positive society impact such as volunteerism through programs such as Experience Corps.

It must have been difficult figuring out how to organize this comprehensive volume since so many of the categories seem to overlap. Common themes certainly emerge and confirm how I view the whole undertaking of helping elders (and myself) keep their edge: that healthy cognition is maintained best in a social setting not, in front of a computer screen; that imagination and creativity play a big role stimulating cognitive functioning across multiple cognitive domains; and, that programs that mine for and elicit meaning are robust catalysts for enhancing quality of life and cognitive resilience. Oh, did I mention that the authors and their participants had fun while working together on these projects?

I would think this book would be helpful for anyone working with the elderly in search of inspiration and creative programs that enhance cognitive wellness and quality of life. For us geropsychologists, it

models ways to think beyond testing and the 50 minute therapy session in providing other helpful services for which elders and their families are willing to pay, especially in these times of diminishing reimbursement rates. It will certainly help when providing recommendations for persons just diagnosed with dementia by opening new and creative ways to thrive while having dementia. I can easily imagine how this book might benefit activity coordinators interested in gaining new approaches to engage in meaningful and stimulating projects. Certainly, managers of specialized memory units and continuum of care communities would benefit from the insights and examples that challenge stereotypes in the care of the cognitively impaired. Teachers of painting, dance, drama, creative writing and other arts may also be stimulated by the examples displayed in this book, especially when their lives have been creatively stimulated by older adults they know and perhaps are becoming. The entries were up-to-date, fresh and representative of the hard work and creative talents of its authors who work in university, community and private practice settings. I understand it will be out in paperback in nine months. Individual chapters are available electronically from Springer.com.

It's also interesting to note an underlying message in the book-that most of the authors themselves seem to have been positively affected and edified by the creative process of discovering, understanding and designing helpful interventions that keep our brains alive and lives interesting as we are living longer and growing older. I am thinking that my own reading of this book created a few more neuronal pathways and "blew the cobwebs out." This weekend, as I read the book, I wrote two poems for my granddaughter, went to a ball game with two good friends and danced at a neighbor's party. It feels like I'm thinking a little more clearly today.