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CJT

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

LESIURE TIME ACTIVITIES FOR THE NURSING
HOME RESIDENT

A Written Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Master of
Arts Degree in Home Economics

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School of Industrial Technology
and Home Economics

Summer Quarter, 1978

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A Future For Friends



**National Nursing Home Week
May 14-20**

AS I GROW OLD

God keep my heart attuned to laughter

When youth is done;

When all the days are gray days, coming after

The warmth, the sun.

Ah! keep me then from bitterness, from grieving,

When life seems cold;

God keep me always loving and believing

As I grow old.

--Author Unknown

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Creative activities in nursing home care facilities for the elderly were started as an answer to the unmet needs of the residents of those facilities. Physical needs, such as food, shelter, and freedom from pain were, until that time, of main importance. Needs of love, identity, and self-respect came only after the first were taken care of. Realizing this, nursing home administrators began to look for an answer to the ever-increasing boredom and apathy that seemed to be prevalent in their patients. It was at this time that the activity director came into being as a very vital part of the nursing homes' curriculum.

The purpose of an activity director is to coordinate a balanced activity program for each resident that will fulfill his needs, as a creative person and allow him to continually develop his self-esteem and sense of dignity through various projects he engages in. Creative activities should not be thought of as a way to kill time but as a means to develop the full creative potential of the individual. Craft activities require individual participation although assembly line crafts are quite successful with some groups. The emphasis in this type activity is primarily on the individual receiving pleasure and satisfaction in his own accomplishment.

Sociability and fun are frequent by-products.

Purpose of the Study

The significance of this endeavor lies in the social, psychological and physiological aspects of the institutionalized elderly resident.

Patients in long term facilities very often find themselves in an alien and sterile environment in which their sense of identity as a thinking person is threatened and undermined through irrelevant or intellectually demeaning activities. To assume that patients do not have the ambition or ability to exercise their mental skills is to negate the genius loci of identity and personality--perhaps the only thing they still have in their possession. (Coleman, p. 100)

Due to modern technological and medical advances there is an increasing number of people reaching 65 years of age, or older, each year. Because of the increased interest and concern by the government and the citizens of this country for the, sometimes, hopeless plight of the elderly more and more attention has been given to improvement of health care facilities and their recreational programs. Many nursing homes are becoming more like residential gathering places for the elderly instead of someplace where they go and wait to die.

Creating various kinds of handicrafts is a valuable adjunct to the treatment of depression for the elderly patient. Where time limits and output is of a secondary consideration, the patient can engage in the craft activity purely for the fun of it. In addition, when they do finish a project they are proud of, they can have the added enjoyment

of seeing that little face light up on the grandchild they may want to present it to.

With these concepts in mind, the purpose of this study was to incorporate a new phase of learning in the nursing home to the already existing crafts and recreational programs and to look at recreation as a part of life--not apart from life.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to teach ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents of nursing homes simple handicrafts that could easily be incorporated into the activity directors' crafts program. The problem included three steps: (1) the determination of which simple handicrafts could be of benefit to the institutionalized elderly; (2) benefits of these handicrafts for the older person; and (3) recommendations for the activity director as to the selection of what new crafts to incorporate into the already existing program.

Delimitations

This study was limited to female residents, between the ages of 65 and 93 years, in three nursing homes within the Greeley, Colorado area.

Definitions of Terms

1. Activity director - One who devises an activity program for each participating resident to help reestablish and maintain his own lifestyle and sense of self-worth.

2. Ambulatory - Residents able to move and walk freely without the use of a wheelchair.

3. Elderly, aged, senior citizen - A person 65 years of age or older.

4. Gerontology - A study of all aspects of the aged and their problems.

5. Leisure - A term used to denote the time spent engaging in self-chosen activities for personal enrichment.

6. Non-ambulatory - For purposes of this study, it refers to wheelchair-bound patients.

7. Nursing home - A medical facility providing more care than a home for the aged but less skilled and technical care than would be received in a hospital.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Residents of long term care facilities have the right to a high quality of care for all their needs. The activities program offered to them at these institutions can become a very rewarding part of their lives. The purpose of the activities program is to provide a varied one of social, recreational, educational, remotivational, and rehabilitative activities to be carried out through small group meetings, larger group meetings and individual activities. The program should attempt to provide the security of the familiar in combination with the challenge of the new.

Some of the deterioration of behavior observed in aging, institutionalized persons seems to be fostered by the institutional climate and is not merely the result of the aging process. Elderly, disabled persons in such a setting may often be functioning far below their capacity. When exposed to greater opportunity and increased expectancy for performance and increased attention and knowledge of approval or disapproval of the staff, functional levels rise. When additional incentives are consistently offered for specific behavior performances, further significant improvement of performance may be obtained. (Filer and O'Connell, pp. 364-365)

Activities programs should provide the opportunity for persons of varied backgrounds to meet together, share experiences, work toward common goals and develop new relationships. There should be a variety of program areas sufficient enough

to meet individual differences in interest and flexible enough to provide for individual growth and development.

Handicrafts is an ideal vehicle in opening up a whole new world for older people. The elderly need to recognize the creative aspects of handicrafts and not treat them as a way to kill time or get through the day. Handicrafts can offer new opportunities for knowledge and give the elderly patient another chance to make a contribution to his environment, his family and to himself as a worthwhile individual.

When applied art is used as a teaching technique in the classroom with older adults there should be freedom of choice in the art form to be used so that there may be opportunity for success, for enhancement of the self-image, for acceptance of the artistic challenge.

Art as a teaching concept gives a sense of continuation. Reaching back into the art of the past provides some understanding, some appreciation, some explanation of that past, (and) of the people. . . .

Visual and tactile art provide equal participation in the learning process for those with either visual or hearing difficulties and for some of those who are too withdrawn or too shy to express themselves verbally. Art is also a way of reaching those of differing backgrounds or cultures, bringing them closer through the art of our collective world. (Borum, p. 36)

Enjoyment of these skills, and an ability to live fully and ably, may well be the impetus needed for supplying the golden years of these residents with fulfillment and reward.

Bley states that nursing home residents participate in leisure programs mainly for any of the following reasons: (1) sheer interest in the content of the program; (2) the opportunity to be of service to others (such as making items to sell at the annual bazaars that each nursing home has);

or (3) the desire to be among people in general (Bley, "Clients' Perception . . .," p. 367).

Crafts programs, as well as any recreational program in the nursing home, should provide a challenging stimulus to its participants. And through their participation these people will feel more accepted, cared about and wanted. It is very important that the teacher encourage the person to continue whatever craft he is working on and give verbal admiration and praise. This approach almost always has a positive effect on the participant, and the group as a whole, to keep up the good work. If they can be made to feel that someone really cares about them and what they accomplish, it can make all the difference in the world in their motivation to continue with, and finish, their projects.

In setting up a crafts program for the nursing home resident, the following suggestions are offered by Eymann:

1. Know the activity well yourself and choose one that you enjoy. Be aware of any pitfalls and try to anticipate and avoid them.
 2. Consider the desired goals. Offer pleasurable, creative activities that will give numerous hours of relaxation and satisfaction, giving everyone the thrill and satisfaction that comes in the very act of expressing oneself.
 3. Make explanations simple and concise. Use illustrations whenever possible. Repeat directions frequently. Remember that some students may be hard of hearing and make a special effort that they understand.
 4. Adapt the activity to the group.
 5. Put the main emphasis on trying and not on competition or success. Praise often.
 6. In explaining the activity use an enthusiastic approach. Be positive.
 7. Plan frequent displays of the finished work.
- (Eymann, #5, p. 9)

Motivating the resident to participate in the activities is sometimes a big job; therefore, the entire staff of the nursing home should believe in the program and the needs it fulfills for the patient. There should be a joint effort in encouraging the residents to participate. It was found in a study by Filer and O'Connell that

persons who participated in such activity programs attained benefits that nonparticipants did not. As a group, the latter are often described as apathetic, inactive, unproductive, less social than others and uninterested in self care. (Filer & O'Connell, p. 350)

There are several reasons why residents do not always want to participate in the ongoing activities program. Among the most prominent are a lack of self-confidence and insecurity, fear of competition and failure, and fear of scorn, or being laughed at. Alleviation of some of these problems can be dealt with by encouraging the staff to get behind the programs, and thereby, encouraging the residents to participate; making sure the residents understand all the directions to any particular craft they happen to be working on; allowing the residents sufficient time to understand the mechanics of how the craft is to be done and not rushing them; and asking the more advanced participants to assist someone else. Each individual in the group needs to feel that his opinions and thoughts are important and will be valued. The instructor should encourage the participant to express any creative ideas or thoughts that he may have concerning the craft. From these ideas the instructor can gain constant feedback

as to how the program is going and whether he needs to alter the lessons in any way.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

As was stated previously, the purpose of this study was to teach ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents of nursing homes various simple handicrafts that could easily be incorporated into the activity directors' crafts program. The problem included three steps: (1) the determination of which simple handicrafts could be of benefit to the institutionalized elderly; (2) benefits of these handicrafts for the older person; and (3) recommendations for the activity director as to the selection of what new crafts to incorporate into the already existing program.

Attempts to resolve the problem were made by working on a one-to-one basis, but within a group structure, in three different nursing homes within the Greeley, Colorado area. Those three homes were: Bonell Good Samaritan Center, Eventide Nursing Home, and Kenton Manor. Considerations of visual, hearing and speech impairments were taken into account when deciding how successful the study could be.

To determine which simple handicrafts could be of benefit to the institutionalized elderly, the writer (1) interviewed the activities director in each of the three nursing homes; (2) observed the participants in the crafts in which

they were engaged at the time; (3) questioned the participants about crafts they could easily do with little or no strain to their eyes or difficulty in moving their hands and fingers; and (4) extensive review of literature related to leisure time activities for the aged.

The ways in which these handicrafts could be beneficial to the older person are many. They can bring forth the latent talents of these people which can challenge their creative abilities, restore their sense of individual worth, build new friendships through weekly craft classes, and create a new kind of happiness that endures throughout their residency in the nursing home.

After the study was completed, recommendations were made for activity directors as to the selection of new crafts that could be incorporated into their already existing programs.

The first craft that was taught in two of the homes was a simple hexagonal-shaped crochet rug using a chain stitch and a puff stitch (see illustrations in Directions section).

Due to the fact that approximately 98% of the participants had done some crocheting in previous years, this simple rug technique was decided upon as one they could easily adapt to. The writer was also trying to determine if this craft could be accomplished without any strain on the eyes or stiffening of the fingers, especially in the case of arthritic fingers.

The second rug project was that of making a simple looped

rug, sometimes with cut loops and called "rya rugs," using burlap, rug yarn and a large blunt-ended tapestry needle (see illustrations).

When presenting the rug ideas to the residents of Kenton Manor, there was no willingness whatsoever to take on the project. Therefore, the writer proceeded to teach the participants, in the six-week learning period, the art of decoupage and raffia-wrapped hot plate mats.

At Kenton Manor, therefore, the first craft attempted was the hot plate mats. The writer cut various round and oval shapes out of stiff cardboard, with a hole in the middle of each, to be the base around which to wrap the different colors of raffia straw. Because the raffia was rather stiff and wouldn't stay rolled in a ball very well, short lengths were used instead. The participants could then tape down one end to the cardboard form and proceed to wrap the straw around and around the cardboard without trying to keep a stubborn ball tightly wound. In this way it could be less frustrating, go faster, and be easier to control.

The last project attempted at Kenton was that of painting white paper plates with different acrylic paints, one color per plate, and then decoupageing small pictures in the center of the plate. These plates, with the added strength of the paint and pictures, could then be used as small serving trays.

There was no cost for materials to any of the participants who engaged in these crafts. The nursing homes usually

had everything that was needed, with the exception of the crochet hooks and the tapestry needles. A few of each was bought at minimal cost from the activity director's monthly budget. There was an abundance of yarn at each nursing home and, occasionally, the patient brought her own if she had a color she liked particularly well. The raffia, paint, and decoupage pictures (which the writer cut from old greeting cards) were among the many piles and drawers of odds and ends that seem to abound in all the activity directors' work-rooms!

Directions for Crocheted Rug

Materials needed for crocheted rug:

Rug yarn

Size H crochet hook

Directions for starting the chain stitch and puff stitch, according to Clinton Mackenzie from his book, New Design in Crochet (see References), pp. 38-41.

There are also several ways to hold the yard. The tension applied to the yarn is the most important part of holding the yarn. If the thread flows too freely, the stitches will usually become too large, and if held too tightly, the stitches will become too small and tight. Therefore, you must find a comfortable average. It is far more important that you have even tension than whether your tension is particularly loose or tight. Relax and your work will flow evenly.

In the traditional approach (Figs. 1 and 2), the yarn must be picked up from the top of the index finger, which is best done with a small hook. The path of the supply yarn through the index and second fingers becomes the lever for adjusting the flow. By squeezing the fingers lightly or letting them loose you can change the tension. With the second method, more suitable to working with today's larger hooks

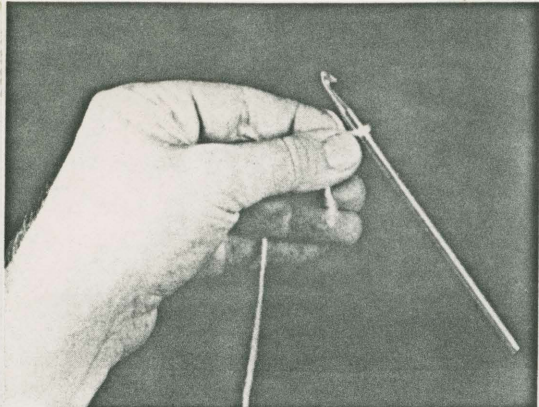


Fig. 1. In the traditional approach, the yarn must be picked up from the top of the index finger

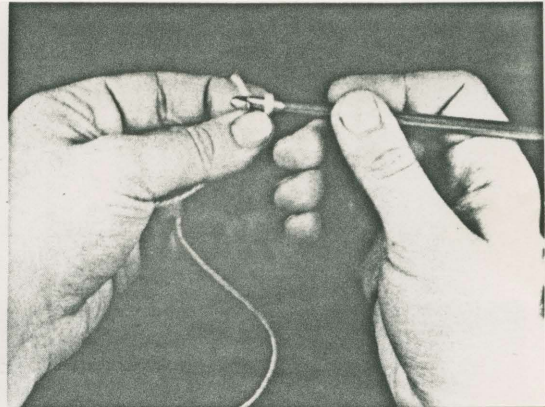


Fig. 2. Traditionally, the index and second fingers adjust the flow of the supply yarn

and materials, the supply yarn is picked up between the grasp on the stitches (between the thumb and third finger) and the index finger. (Figs. 3 and 4). The finger becomes

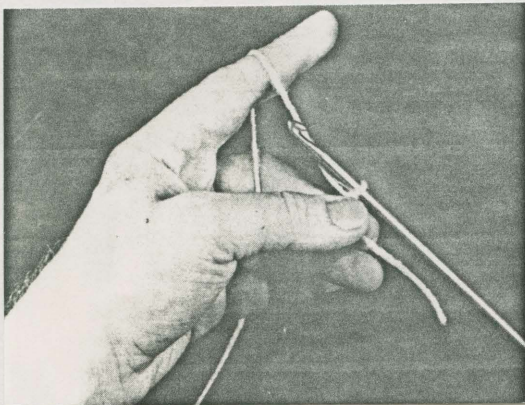


Fig. 3. In the modern approach, the supply yarn is picked up between the grasp on the stitches (with the thumb and third finger) and the index finger

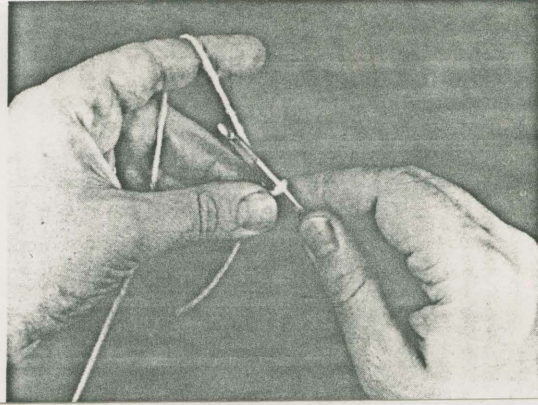


Fig. 4. With this sturdier grip, the index finger becomes the device to adjust the tension

a device to adjust the tension. If you have not crocheted before, I would suggest the second method. This method gives a clear and distinct place from which to pick up the yarn, it makes tension adjustment easy, and leaves all of the work to be done by the hand holding the hook.

If you are right-handed, hold nothing but the hook in your right hand. Hold the yarn and the body of the fabric in the left hand, so that your right hand is completely free to manipulate the hook. The left hand essentially remains still, the work being done with the right hand. The reverse should be followed by the left-handed person.

Slip knot

A slip knot is used to start the chain that all regular crochet stitches begin with. A series of chain stitches make up the foundation chain or starting chain of any crochet piece. The slip knot is made by forming an arc with the yarn and twisting it (Fig. 5), after which the yarn coming from the yarn supply is pulled through the loop made by the twist (Fig. 6). Pull the yarn tight to complete the slip knot (Fig. 7).

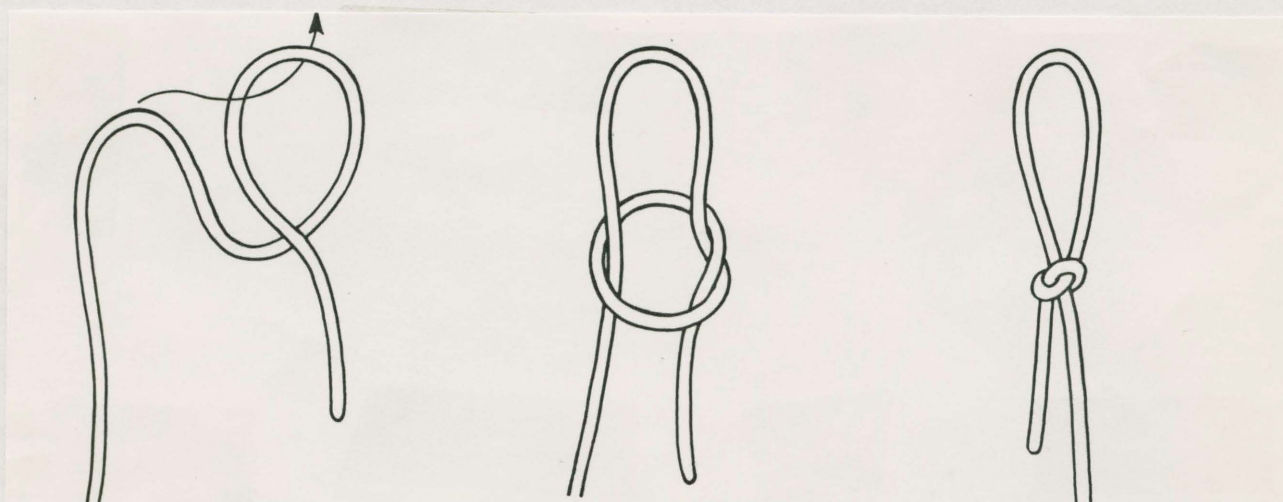


Fig. 5. Slip knot,
step one

Fig. 6. Slip knot,
step two

Fig. 7.
Slip knot,
step three

The yarn that feeds into the work from your supply is referred to as the source yarn. When making the slip knot it is possible to get this backwards so that when you pull on the cut end the loop over the hook will tighten up. This is incorrect. You have pulled the wrong strand through the loop.

Insert the hook into the slip knot and draw the slip knot down onto the shank of the hook. You are now ready to begin crocheting.

Chain stitch

The chain stitch is the basic stitch that is compounded to make all other crochet stitches. To make the chain stitch, pass the hook to the left and under the yarn (Fig. 8), catch the yarn, and draw it through the loop on the hook, making a new loop or chain stitch. Repeat this stitch until the foundation chain is the desired length. At the beginning, your work will twist and curl. After the foundation chain is made, the addition of more rows will make the piece flatten out.

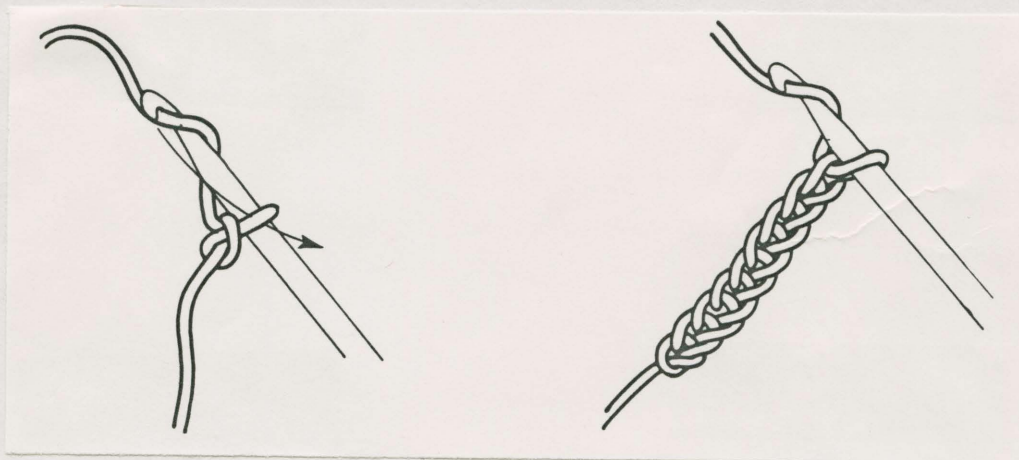


Fig. 8. Chain stitch

Fig. 9. Foundation chain shown from the front

Catching the yarn to draw each stitch is simpler and will make your work easier than throwing the yarn, as done in the American system of knitting. Also, you must always pick up the yarn by passing the hook to the left and under the yarn, unless otherwise directed. Since you are in effect wrapping the yarn over the hook, this is often referred to as a "yarn over" or "wool round hook."

Each successive loop should slip through without taking muscle to do it. You should be able to draw the yarn through the hook using only your fingertips to grip the hook. As you draw the yarn through each loop, you must be careful not to close the loop by pulling the yarn from the source too tight. Once the yarn is caught, the tension can be relaxed as you bring it through the loop. Since the size of the stitch is determined by the shank of the hook, each loop must be slipped fully on to it and remain the same size as it is slipped off.

Your grip on the stitches can be moved closer to the hook as each stitch is completed, making it easier to get the hook

through the stitch. It is also helpful to turn the hook as you draw it through the stitch so it comes through upside down. This prevents the hook from catching the loop you are drawing through.

When the chain is complete, notice that there are two dies or faces to it. One side is flat; the other has a ridge on it. When looking at the flat side, which we will call the front, note that it looks like loops are growing out of one another (Fig. 9, page 16). If you turn the chain over to the back, or the side with the ridge, it looks like there is an attaching stitch sewn through each loop (Fig. 10). Whether

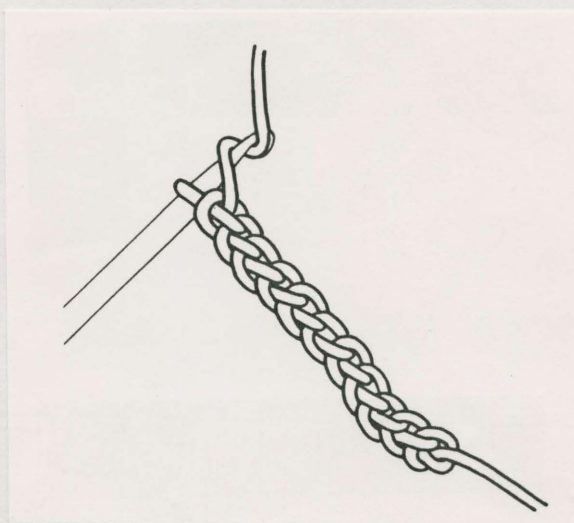


Fig. 10. Foundation chain shown from the back

specific directions suggest working from the front or the back, you must be careful not to twist the chain or it will spoil the edge of the fabric.

Counting stitches

If you are counting stitches, everything but the loop on the hook is counted. (As the yarn is caught and drawn through it, the slip knot at the beginning becomes a stitch.) The loop on the hook will become part of the next stitch made.

Puff stitch

Make a foundation chain six chains long then connect the ends together with a slip stitch. Work puff stitch into

center of first chain stitch as follows: bring yarn over hook, then draw up a loop in stitch, pulling up loop on hook $\frac{1}{2}$ " or longer (YO, draw up another loop same length as before in same stitch as last loop) as often as required for size of puff, retaining loops on hook, yarn over hook and through all loops on hook, chain 1 to complete puff. (Instant Crochet, p. 31).

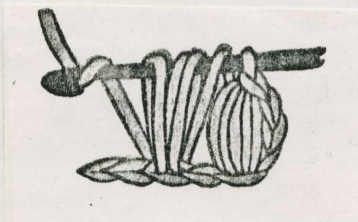


Fig. 11. Puff
stitch

To start the hexagonal-shaped rug, begin with six chain stitches, then connect the two ends together with a slip stitch. Into the center of each chain stitch crochet a puff stitch approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " in height. You will notice that in between each of the six puff stitches now there is a good size space. Working in a counterclockwise direction, begin to work two puff stitches into each space so that when you have completed the entire circle you will have six pairs of puff stitches--one pair for each space. These six pairs establish the hexagonal pattern of the rug. Now you will notice that between each pair of stitches there is a space. In this space you will crochet one puff stitch. The next working space you come to is a pair of puff stitches so in between them you will crochet two more puffs, but only in that one space. The next space to the left will be for one puff stitch, the next for a pair. The rug is worked in a spiral movement; therefore, every time you come to your starting place, you will have one extra space in between the six pairs of puff stitches. As the rug gets larger, the pairs spread out and you will have more and more single puff stitches in between the pairs. When your rug has reached the size you want, then cut the yarn about two inches from the last stitch, tie it and knot it to the next stitch and weave the loose end through the rug so that it won't show. At this point, fringe can be added if you so desire.

These rugs can also be used as lap robes (depending on the size) for the elderly person in a wheelchair who wants to keep his legs covered or to warm up chilled legs and feet. They can also be laid across the backs of chairs or

sofas as an added cushion, especially good for persons with bony backs.

Directions for Loop Rug

Materials needed:

Acrylic or cotton rug yarn

Large-eyed, blunt-point tapestry needle

Burlap (natural color is best)

Scissors

This type of rug can be any size, whether square or rectangular, and can be made into a wall hanging, as well as a rug. To begin, cut the burlap approximately 2 inches bigger than the desired size on all four sides. Two inches from each border pick out the weft or warp yarn, depending on whether you're working on the length or width side, and pull it out entirely from the burlap piece. By doing this you will have established a border on all four sides. The next step is to draw your design onto the burlap. A magic marker works best in doing this.

Once your design has been incorporated onto the burlap you are now ready to start pulling out the burlap weft (filler) yarns so as to make the empty row in which to work. This is done by counting every third weft yarn and pulling it completely out of the burlap. It is easier to grab hold of these yarns if you insert your tapestry needle under the yarn and pull up, thus giving a loop in which to pull. Every third weft yarn is pulled the entire length of the

of the burlap until you reach the border line where you previously pulled that yarn.

To begin the sewing, thread your needle with whatever color you choose to begin with and tie a knot at one end (do not use a doubled yarn). Starting at the lower left-hand border of the burlap, insert the needle through the first hole (from the bottom side) into the first stitching row until the knot catches. With your left thumb holding the desired length of your loop down onto the burlap ($3/4$ " is a good length), take the needle in the right hand and go under two warp yarns. (Fig. 12). (Monk's cloth is being used as the base for this rug.)

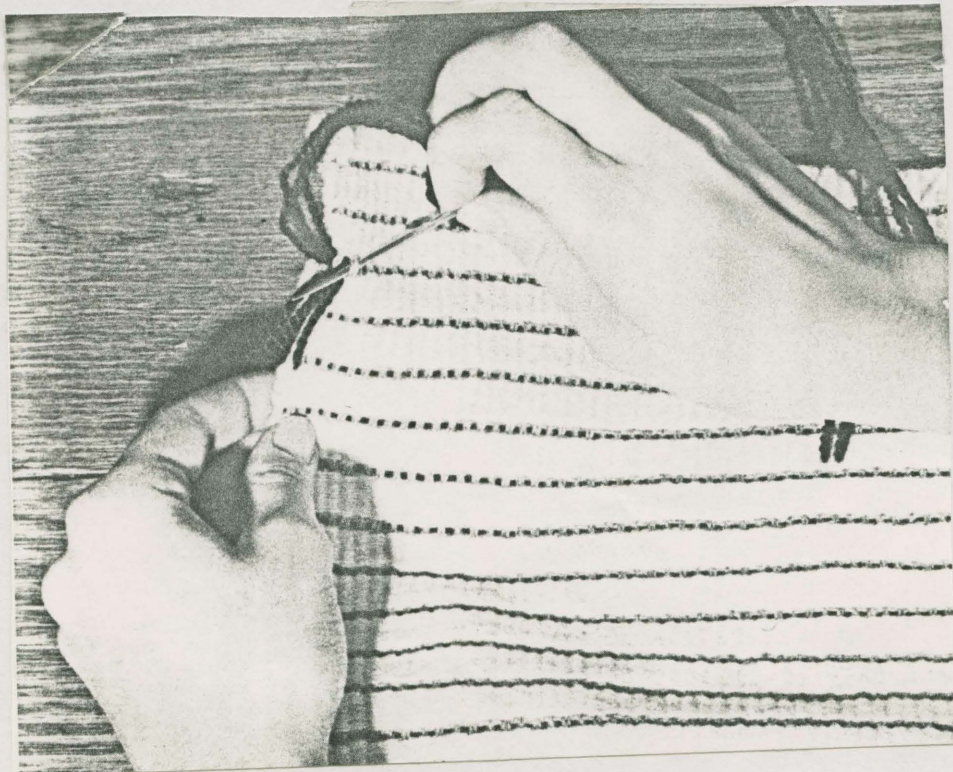


Fig. 12. The needle is put into the next two warp threads, moving from right to left
(Illustrations from Parker, Xenia Ley. Hooked Rugs and Ryas, pp. 61, 63, 64.)

Pull the yarn so that the loop on your thumb is the desired length of the pile. (Fig. 13).

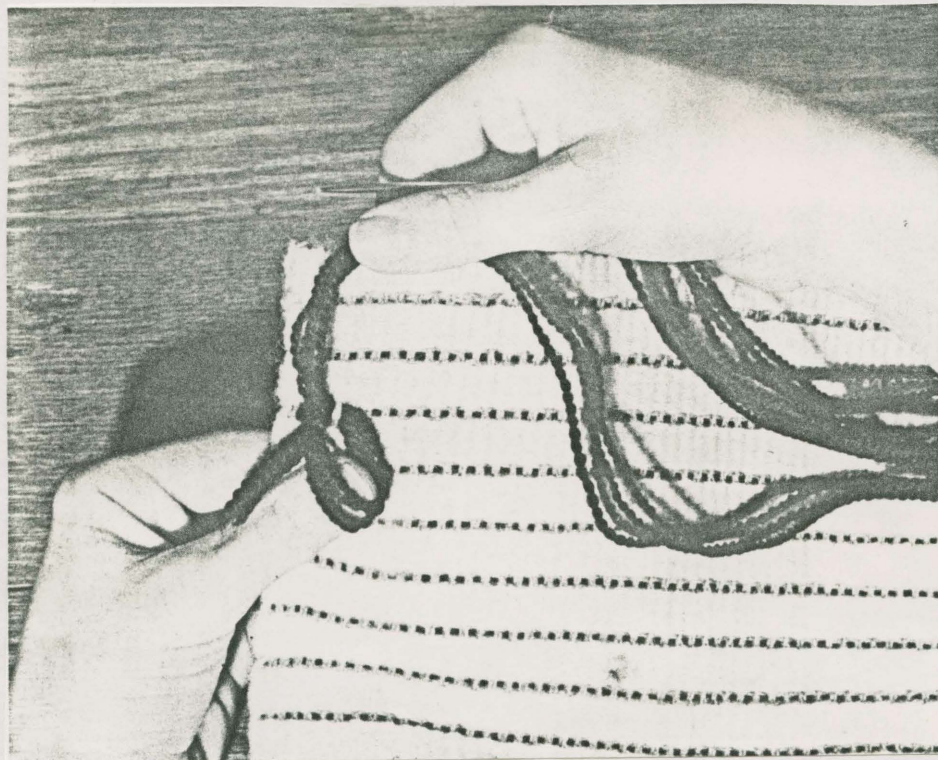


Fig. 13. Pull the wool to make the desired length loop

The horizontal rows of the loops are always worked from the left side to the right side on the burlap, while the actual stitches being taken are inserted right to left.

Now that you have a loop, move your needle to the right two more warp yarns over and repeat the stitch only this time pulling the yarn all the way through instead of holding and making a loop. This step secures the previous loop in place so that it can't pull out. (Figs. 14 and 15).

Continue with this procedure of looping and "securing" (knotting) until you come to the right border. At this

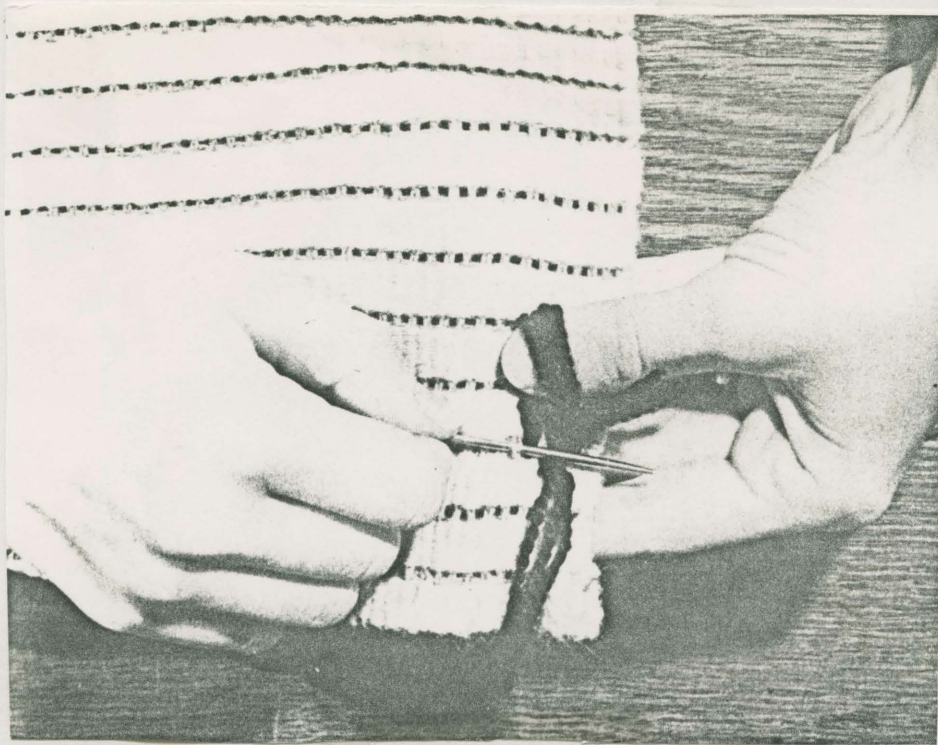


Fig. 14. Put the needle behind the next warp thread.

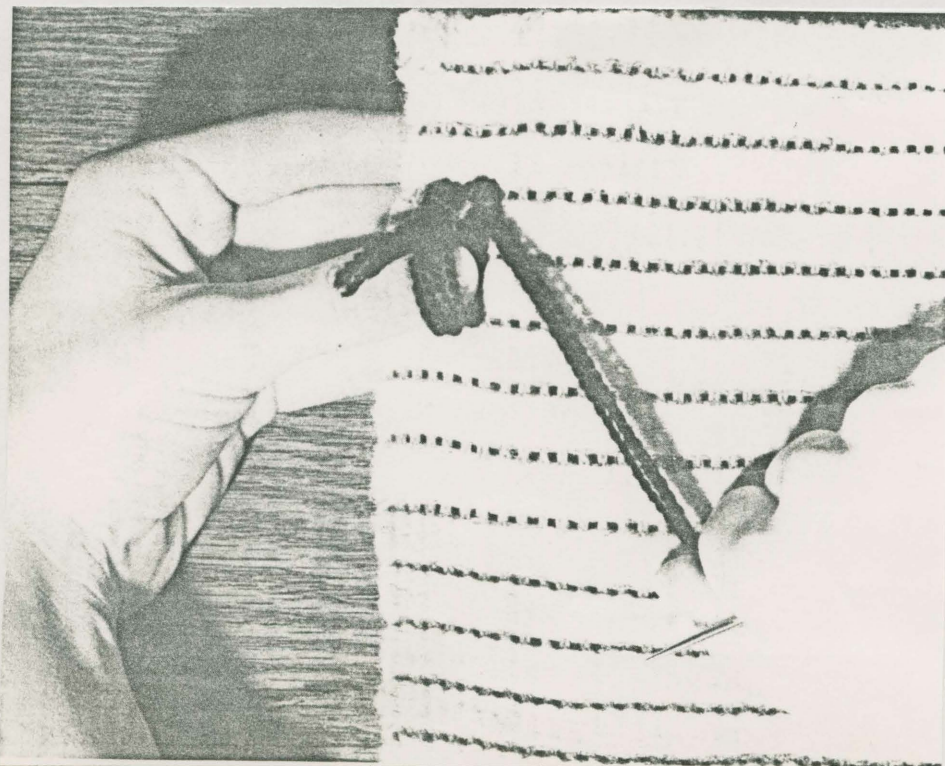


Fig. 15. Pull the yarn to form the knot.

point, finish with a knot and cut end of yarn to match the length of the loops.

If you are not making the rug a total solid color and have incorporated some design onto the burlap, then the procedure is still the same with one exception. When sewing in your rows from left to right and you come to a part of the design that requires another color, then knot the end of the color you are working with and cut the yarn. Begin with the new color in the same way you started each new row and continue with that new color. Always remember to work in only one row at a time, left side to right side, finishing that row then going on to the next row. Do not sew in your design and then fill in your background because the rug will develop puckers and will stretch out of shape on the bias.

When finished completely, turn under the 2 inch border allowance and whipstitch down onto the back of the rug. As a final finishing touch, a cloth backing can be sewn onto the edges of the back of the rug, thereby concealing all unfinished edges.

If you would like to make your rug into a wall hanging, sew two loops of burlap equidistant from the outside edges of the rug on the end you are going to hang up. These loops should be approximately 6 inches long and 2 inches wide. The two inch width is then folded in half, right sides together, stitched together and then turned right side out. This leaves a loop approximately 3/4" in width and 6 inches in

length. The length is folded in half and sewn down to the back of the rug $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the edge. The backing is then sewn over these rough edges so that the backing edge and the rug edge meet flush to each other. A wooden dowel, cut the width of the rug, is then put through these two loops to allow the rug to hang. The dowel can be painted to match the predominant color of the rug, if so desired.

At this time, or any time during the loop-making process, the loops can be cut with scissors to achieve a true rya effect.

Directions for Raffia-Covered Mats

Materials needed:

Round and oval cardboard shapes with one medium-sized hole in the middle

Natural and colored raffia

Scissors

Scotch tape

Wrapping cardboard mats is the simplest way of using raffia. These cardboard shapes are used as a foundation and raffia is wound round and round to cover it evenly, with the strands overlapping slightly so that there are no gaps. Different color segments will make the pattern interesting and the center hole in the cardboard can either be left open or filled with criss-cross strands or interwoven in a web design.

Starting or joining on new raffia is done by holding the

new strand slanting downwards to the right (a piece of tape to hold it in place is a great help) and winding the raffia on straight, over and over from left to right. (Fig. 16).

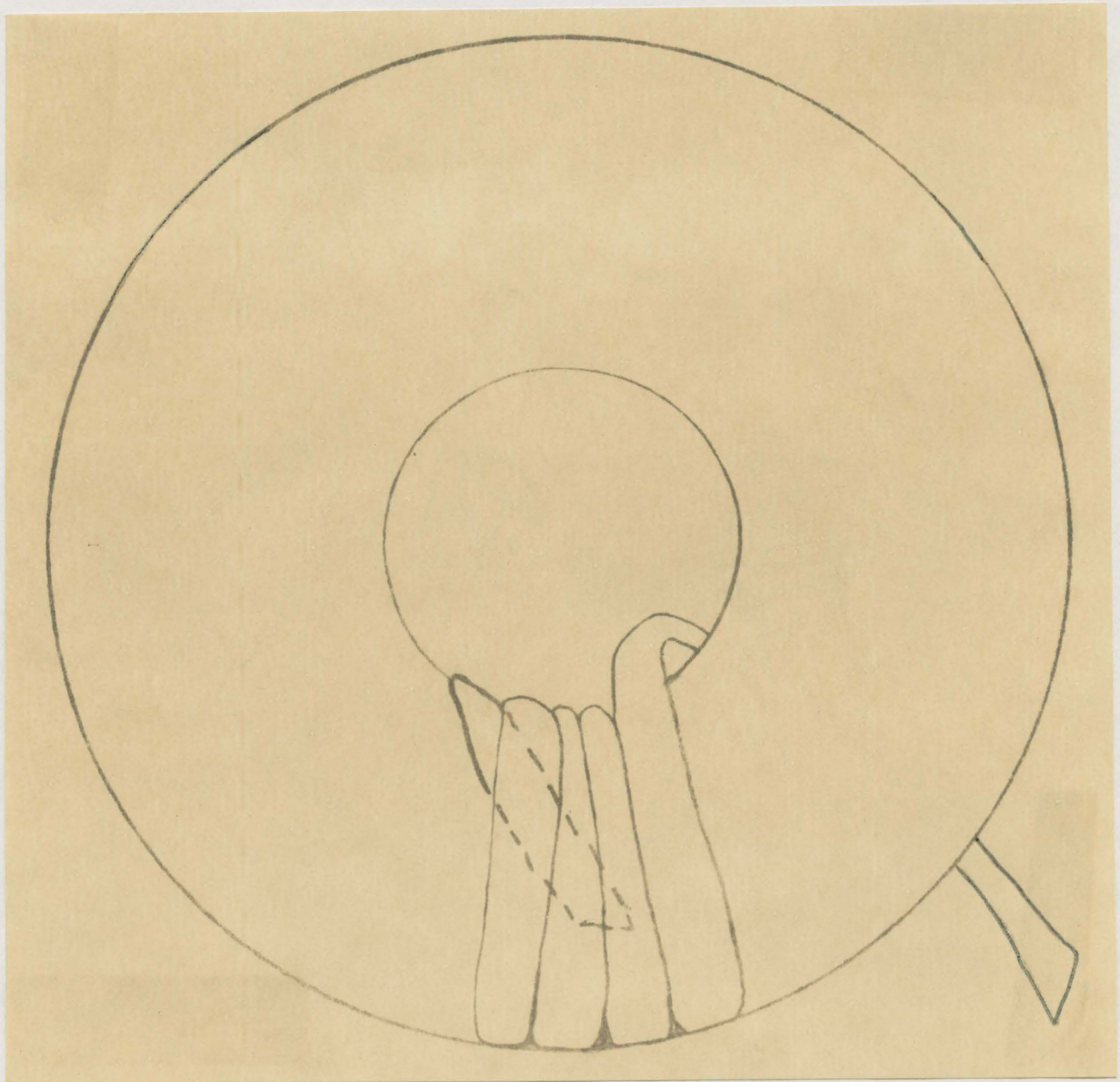


Fig. 16. The dotted section of raffia indicates the beginning of the work when the end of raffia is covered by the next wound strands. When mat is complete, tuck finishing end away on wrong side.

When finishing off, thread the end carefully away under the windings on the wrong side. There are times when you will

have to knot raffia ends--tie firmly and hammer the knot flat.

Directions for Decoupage Trays

Materials needed:

Plain white paper plates
Selection of greeting card pictures
Acrylic paints (assorted colors)
Paintbrush ($\frac{1}{2}$ " wide)
White glue
Decoupage finish or clear varnish
Scissors

A good way to use up those holiday postcards and display them in an attractive and permanent way is to mount them in a decoupage picture or tray. First, paint the entire top side of the paper plate, then put them aside to dry. Next, cut out the cards, picking out the most interesting features or shapes. Arrange the cards together first, before doing any sticking down. So as to allow for a brightly colored trim, you will only be arranging enough pictures to cover the flat part of the paper plate. The scalloped or pleated edges will be left untouched. After the paint had dried thoroughly, begin to coat the backs of each picture with glue and stick them onto the plate in the prearranged order. When dry, give the first coat of varnish or decoupage finish. Allow to dry, then apply two more coats, drying one before

applying the next. Not only does this seal the pictures down well, but it gives a waterproof finish to the plate and increases its durability and strength. Continue to apply coats of finish until the surface is entirely smooth and the cards sunk so that when you rub your finger over it, you are unable to feel any sharp edges.

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

The purpose of this study was to teach ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents of nursing homes various simple handicrafts that could easily be incorporated into the activity directors' crafts program. The problem included three steps: (1) the determination of which simple handicrafts could be of benefit to the institutionalized elderly; (2) benefits of these handicrafts for the older person; and (3) recommendations for the activity director, as to the selection of what new crafts to incorporate into the already existing program.

Through a review of the literature, personal observations and interviews with the residents in the nursing homes, and interviews with the activity directors, the physical, mental, and social characteristics of the aged were established. In developing possible new crafts for the participants, the writer reviewed current crafts textbooks and periodicals, courses of study, and statements by leaders in the field of gerontology, psychology, sociology and arts and crafts.

Of the various crafts that were considered only four

were decided upon for the six-week study. These four crafts included a crocheted rug, a loop rug, raffia covered hot plate mats and decoupage. From the writer's observation, the latter three of these crafts were easily learned, simple to do, and the majority of the participants produced a finished product. The crocheted rug seemed to give every participant trouble. Although 98% of them had some previous crocheting experience, they just could not grasp the concept of the hexagonal shape. The hexagonal shape is accomplished by crocheting two puff stitches into one hole. The rug is worked in a spiral shape. It consisted of incorporating one puff stitch per hole, except at certain intervals where two are crocheted into one hole. The participants simply could not pick up that idea; therefore, even though a couple of ladies finished a sample rug, they were not hexagonal shaped ones.

The other three crafts were successful and the activity directors and the writer were pleased with the results. In referring to the progress charts (pp. 30-33), the reader can see that a few of the participants were bothered by eye strain but in each case it was minimal and the participant insisted on continuing. Only one of the ladies felt a bit of a strain in her fingers when working with the hot plate mats. In this particular case the lady was quite crippled with arthritis and used to dealing with this pain, so she continued on without any complaints.

Crocheted Rugs	Previous Crocheting Experience	Could Comprehend Directions	Craft Caused Eye Strain	Craft Caused Pain in Hands or Fingers	Continued with Craft Outside of Class	Participant Satisfied With Her Progress of the Craft	Continued Working on Craft After Instruction Period Had Ended

BONELL

Mrs. A	X	X			X	X	X
Mrs. A	X	<i>Not clearly</i>	X				
Mrs. B	X	X				X	
Mrs. L						X	
Miss O.	X	<i>Not clearly</i>				X	

EVENTIDE

Mrs. H	X	<i>vaguely</i>	X				
Mrs. H.	X	<i>Not clearly</i>					
Mrs. O.	X	X	X			X	
Mrs. P.	X	X			X	X	X
Mrs. T.	X	X			X	X	X

Loop Rugs	Previous Experience in This Craft	Could Comprehend Directions	Craft Caused Eye Strain	Craft Caused Pain in Hands or Fingers	Continued with Craft Outside of Class	Participant Was Satisfied with Her Progress of the Craft	Continued Working on Craft After Instruction Period Had Ended
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BONELL

Mrs. A.		X	X				
Mrs. A		X			X	X	X
Mrs. B	X	X			X	X	X
Mrs. L		X				X	
Miss O.		X				X	X

EVENTIDE

Because the activity director at Eventide was not available for 5 out of the 6 classes, and therefore no materials were bought to make the loop rugs, the class continued to work on their crocheted rugs the entire 6-week class period.

Raffia Hot-Plate Mats	Previous Craft Experience	Could Comprehend Directions	Craft Caused Eye Strain	Craft Caused Pain in Hands or Fingers	Continued with Craft Outside of Class	Participant was Satisfied with Her Progress of the Craft	Continued Working on Craft After Instruction Period Had Ended
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KENTON MANOR

Mrs. A.		X		X		X	
Mrs. B.		X				X	
Mrs. C.		X				X	X
Mrs. G.		X				X	X
Mrs. G.		X				X	
Mrs. M.		X				X	
Mrs. S.		X				X	
Mrs. W.		X				X	

Decoupage	Previous Craft Experience	Could Comprehend Directions	Craft Caused Eye Strain	Craft Caused Pain in Hands or Fingers	Continued with Craft Outside of Class	Participant Was Satisfied with Her Progress of the Craft	Continued Working on Craft After Instruction Period Ended
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KENTON MANOR

Mrs. A.	X	X				X	X
Mrs. B.	X	X				X	X
Mrs. C.	X	X				X	
Mrs. G.	X	X				X	
Mrs. G.	X	X				X	X
Mrs. M.	X	X				X	
Mrs. S.	X	X				X	
Mrs. W.							

CROCHETING AT BONELL



CROCHETING AT EVENTIDE



LOOP RUG-MAKING AT BONELL



RAFFIA
WRAPPING AT
KENTON MANOR



DECOUPAGING AT KENTON MANOR



Conclusions

In considering the degree of success of this study, the writer had to answer three pertinent questions. These questions were:

1. Did the activities reawaken their dormant interests?
2. Did the activities provide experiences for learning new skills and acquiring new interests?
3. Did the activities provide meaningful experiences for learning new skills?

Through observations and questioning of the participants the most favored crafts were the loop rugs and the decoupageing. They enjoyed the simple instructions and fast progress of the loop rug making. All participants in the decoupageing class had had previous experience with this craft so they were able to adapt to the instructions quickly. All of those who tried their hand at crocheting, even though they didn't establish the pattern, still seemed to enjoy indulging in this age-old craft once again. None of the participants who worked on the hot plate mats had ever done anything like that before so at first they were a bit slow. But once they started using strips of raffia instead of trying to keep the ball rolled tightly, they all seemed to be fully engrossed in the craft. So the writer would have to answer an affirmative to the first question for the majority of the crafts.

In answer to the second question as to whether the activities provided experiences for learning new skills and acquiring new interests, the writer would once again give a definite yes. Each craft that was taught was unique in that the participants had never done that exact craft or way of producing that craft in that particular way. Even though most of the participants had crocheted before, none of them had done a puff stitch or a hexagonal shaped rug. And none of the decoupage participants had ever made serving trays using that familiar craft before.

Providing meaningful experiences for learning new skills seemed, to the writer, a prevalent observation with all the crafts at all three nursing homes. Even though it was their option to come to class or not, the majority of the participants came back week after week. It seemed to be a learning time for them, as well as a social hour and there was usually much chatter and comparing of projects during each class period.

The writer would conclude that all the classes were moderately to highly successful, depending on the particular craft being taught.

Recommendations

Concluding this study, the writer would recommend that all four crafts be added to the activity directors' program. The reader must take into account, though, the limitations of this study, including time allowed each craft, number of

participants and the restrictions of working at only three nursing homes.

Numerous other crafts could have been attempted but because of the six-week time limit in which to teach the classes, the writer chose the crafts she felt to be most advantageous for the participants. The writer would recommend that other studies of this type allow for a longer teaching period. This would give the teacher more opportunities to work on a more individual basis with the participants. This would also allow the teacher to work through any problems that arose while the participants were engaging in the craft. In this case, the problems the ladies were having with the crocheted rug could have been remedied, in many cases, had there been more time.

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