





ORTA DOĐU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY



SEMINARS BETWEEN SEMESTERS
(SBS): TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE
FROM HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS TO PUBLIC

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Introduction

- ODTU Seminars between Semesters (SbS) held in February 2015 for the 3rd time.
- 5 days, 54 speakers with 55 different topics, 77 sessions, 14508 tickets and 5701 people
- These seminars was intended to transfer the knowledge generated at the university to public.



Very short literature review...

Adult Development:

increasing one's cognitive, affective, interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities that enable us to manage better **the complex demands of adult life** (work and life) (DragoSeverson, 2004).



Very short literature review...

Life-long Learning: Aspin et al. (2001) – lifelong learning is a multi-faceted & complex relationship between 3 major outcomes:

1. Education for a more highly skilled workforce for economic justification.

2. Education for personal development.

3. *Education for creating a stronger and more inclusive society based on the view that education is a public good, a prerequisite for effective participation in society by all citizens, and a process that begins at home, continues through compulsory & post-compulsory formal education and is carried on through the rest of the life span.*



Very short literature review...

- Brookfield (2012) raised this question “What kind of lifelong learning develops communities in a critical way?”
- Field (2009) - “participation in lifelong learning tends to enhance *social capital* (“those tangible assets [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse-OECD), by helping develop social competencies, extending social networks, and promoting shared norms and tolerance of others” (p.23).
- As Merriam & Kee (2014) pointed out importance of social capital as a major component in *community wellbeing*, the universities can contribute to increase this social capital through life long learning activities.



Really brief on Methodology

- Administered online evaluation survey filled by 864 participants & 27 speakers.
- Demographics of the participants / speakers, logistics and content of the seminar were asked to be evaluated.
- Thematic analysis was done to analyze the answers to open-ended questions about the content of the seminars.



DATA ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION



Topics of the Seminars

Title of the seminars can be categorized under four main topics:

1. *Related to Daily Life* (Astrotalks, Water & Life, Golden Ratio, Relationship Guide for Couples)
2. *Related to Engineering* (Jets in Aviation, Polymers Producing Electricity, Solar Power, Engineering & Design, Artificial Intelligence)



Topics of the Seminars

Title of the seminars can be categorized under four main topics:

3. Related to Natural Sciences (Neutron Physics, Environmental Ethics, How Brain Works)

4. Related to Social Sciences (Urbanization & Urban Transformation, UN Developmental Reports, Ottomans during World War I)



Demographics

Participation by Years:

Years	# of People	Sessions
2013	780	48
2014	2425	72
2015	5701	77



Demogprahics

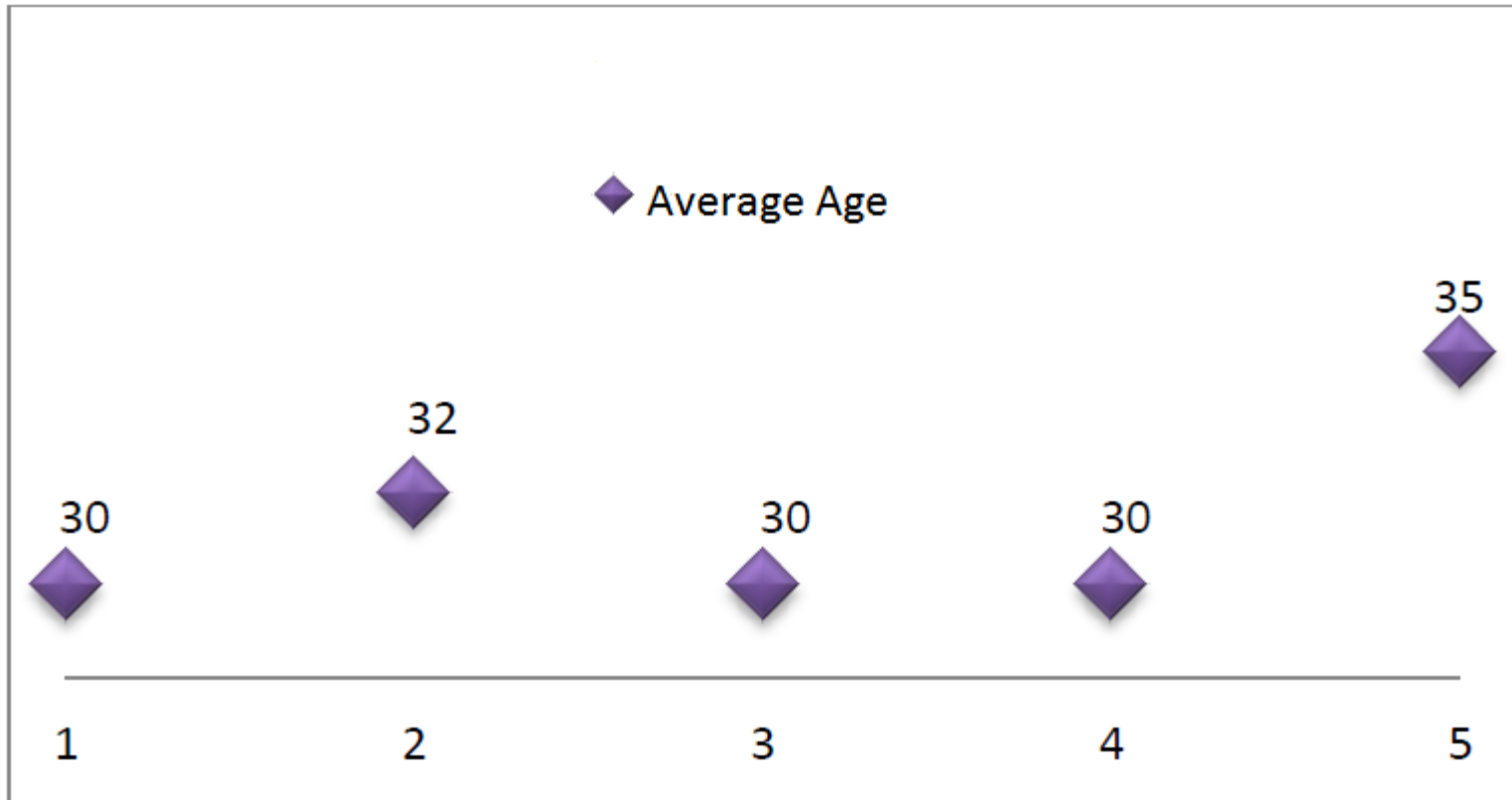
Evaluation by Participants (w/ Gender)

Day	Women	Men	Total
1	203	113	316
2	137	111	248
3	81	73	154
4	41	53	94
5	29	23	53
TOTAL	491	373	864



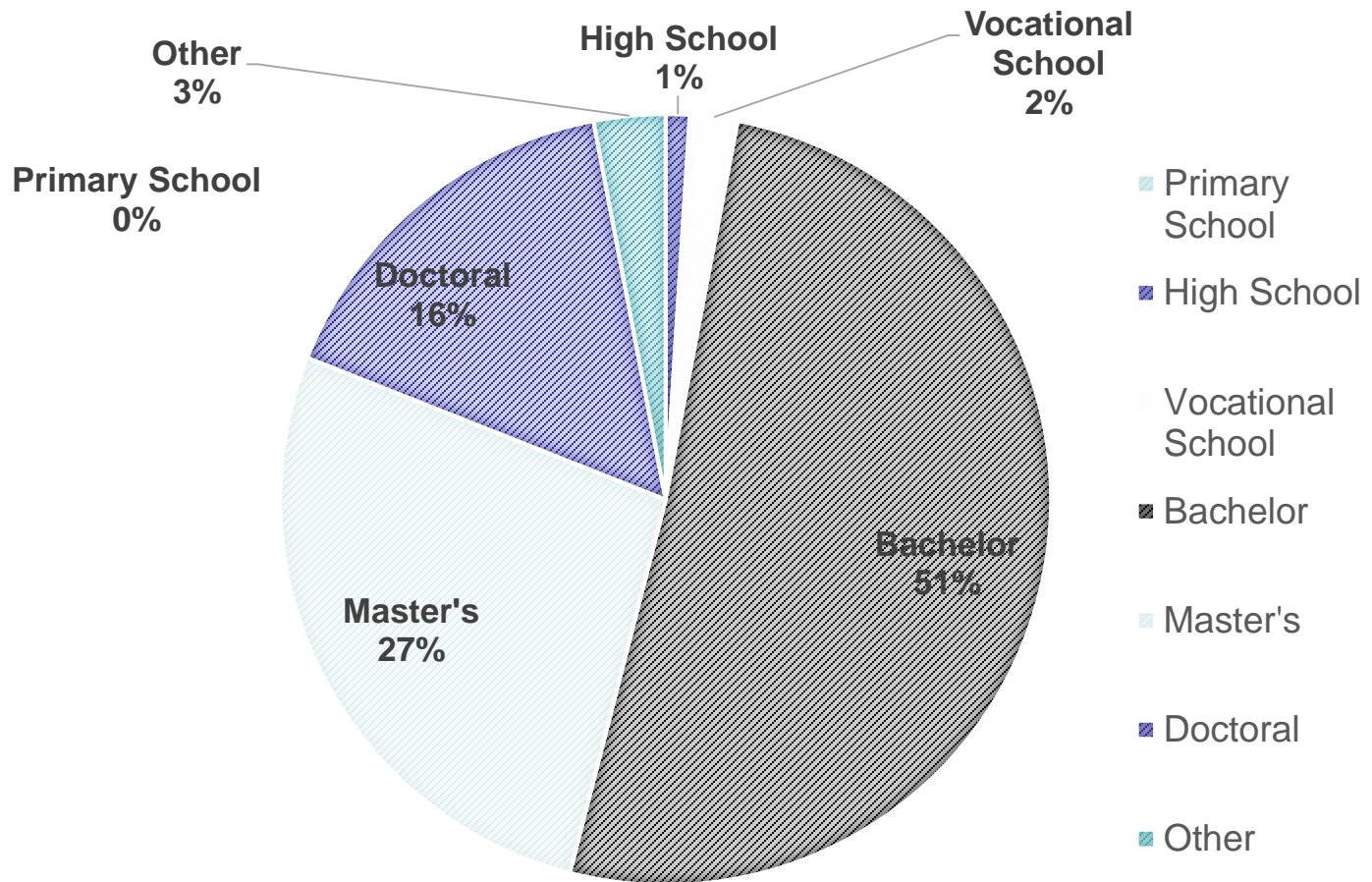
Demographics

Average Age by each day of the Seminars



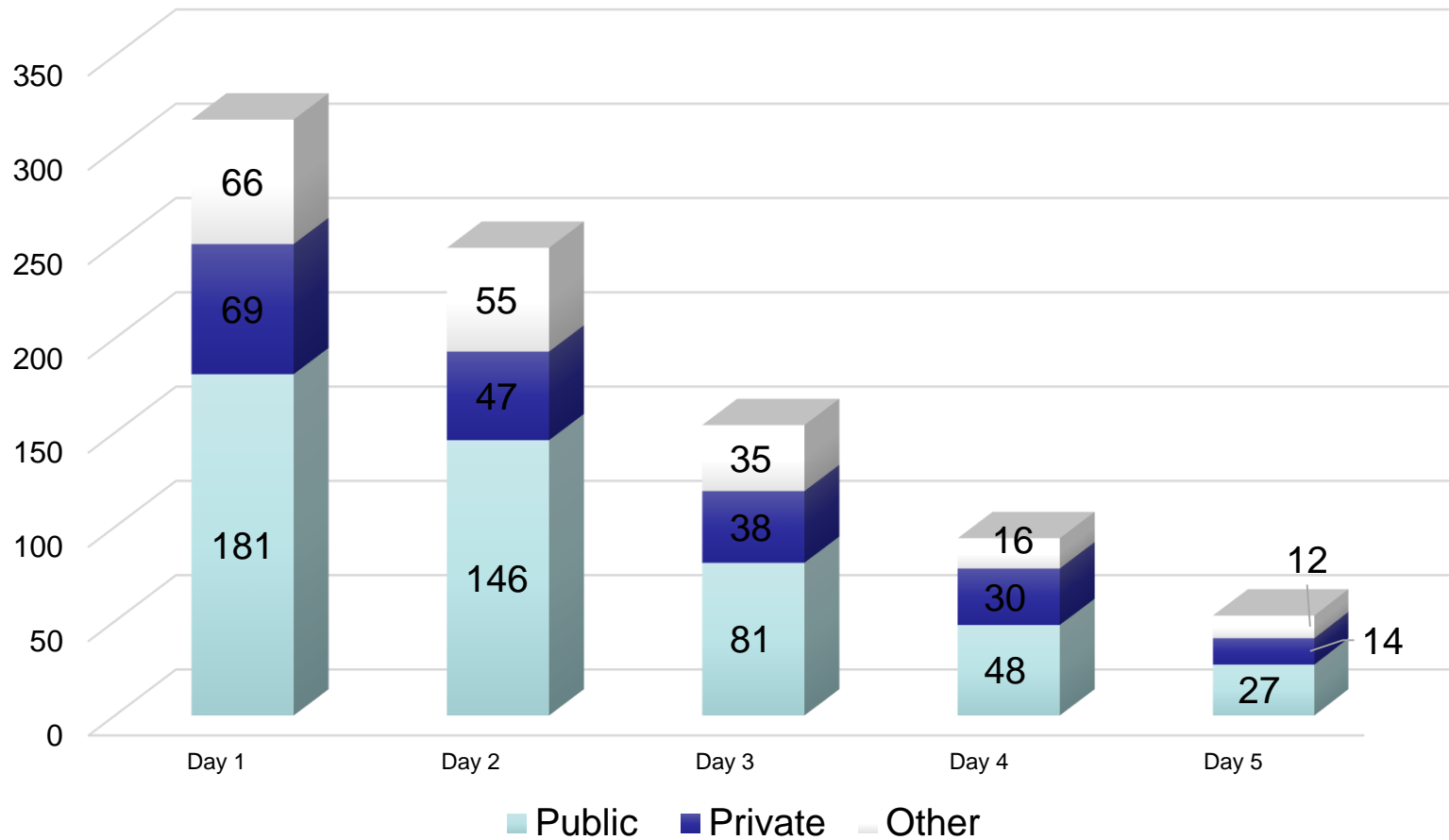
Demographics

Educational Background



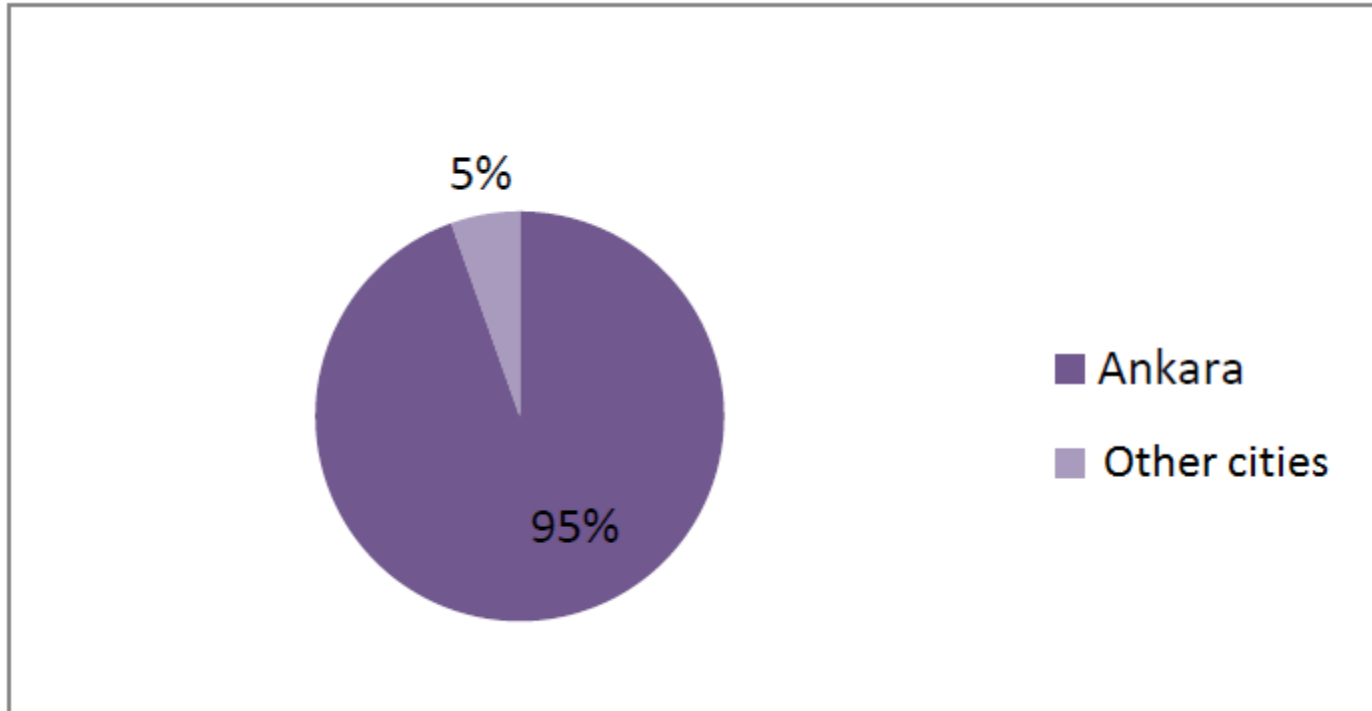
Demographics

Work Background



Demographics

Where did you come from?

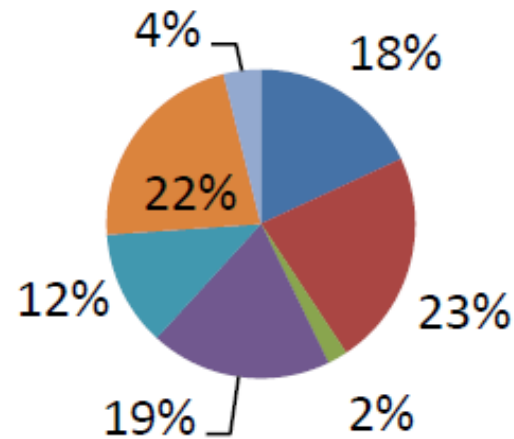


*95% is from Ankara (N=816) 5% is out of Ankara (N=47)



Demographics

How did you learn about the seminars?



Open-Ended Qs: Motivation for Participation*

- Intrinsic motivation (n = 196)

More than half of the participants stated that they attended ODTU SbS due to their personal interest, curiosity, to gain new knowledge, to learn something new or to gain new perspective on a topic that they are interested in or have curiosity.

- Personal Development (n = 33)

Mostly the participants stated that they would like to contribute to their personal development on various topics provided by the seminars

**307 responses*



Open-Ended Qs: Motivation for Participation

- *Due to particular Speaker / Researcher / Expert*
(n = 27)

Participants mentioned particular faculty members' name that they have been following their work

- *Due to Academic Interest* (n = 27)

These people stated that they are students who study in those particular fields and wanted to hear more from the experts.



Open-Ended Qs: Motivation for Participation

- *Professional Development* (n = 25)

To help improve their curriculum vitae and impact their work practices

- *Due to ODTÜ & Convenience* (n=12)

Those people specifically mentioned that either they have been curious about METU or they knew graduates of the university and wanted to be in this environment.



Open-Ended Qs: Motivation for Participation

Quotes:

“In the midst of limited knowledge and culture of our daily lives, these seminars helped us catch up with the science world and develop ourselves on our interests.”

“Can I add a new perspective to my profession and classes? Can I equip myself with new instruments. What is the difference between ODTÜ and other universities? To see the difference of ODTÜ and its academic environment. Because I admire ODTÜ students when they produce disproportional intelligence towards politics. Because I admire Faculty XXXX and her knowledge on Ecology...I like to keep myself up-to-date as a teacher and if one does not recharge her/himself, one can lose her/his productivity. I can find more reasons for why I came here and why I am so willing to be here... I stood against my principal who has also a master degree to come here”



Open-Ended Qs: Meeting the Expectations

- 267 responses reflected *positive feedback* on the seminars meeting the expectations
- 17 people gave *negative feedback* due to technical/academic information or not sufficient depth of knowledge
- 15 people said that the seminars was *partially meeting their expectations* due to the limited time of the seminars.



Open-Ended Qs: Meeting the Expectations

Quotes:

“Seminars were more in the conversational tone than it was in-depth discussions and analysis and that was my expectation anyway”

“Overall, the seminar I attended met my expectations when I consider its title. But ODTÜ can provide more information on the seminars, so that the participants would know the content and the level of the seminar”

“Considering the limited time, the seminar was great and the things that I learned will be very helpful”

“It did not meet my expectations as I was hoping to get more daily and practical information from the seminars”



Open-Ended Qs: Knowledge Transfer

- Personal life (N=67)
- Professional life (N=46)
- Academic life (N=38)
- Common Knowledge -created curiosity, brought new perspective, refreshed my memory, provided resources (N=32)
- Simple YES (N=94)



Open-Ended Qs: Knowledge Transfer

Quotes:

“Yes. What I learned in this very short amount of time triggered me to do more research, to learn more and to participate other seminars”

“I learned so many things about how the brain works and I even decided to get some professional help”

“I teach in Sustainability Literacy program for MoNE and TEMA Foundation and I will definitely be better now on Environmental Ethics & Sustainability topics”

“Sometimes it inspires us... Knowledge is knowledge and we don't know where it takes us”

“Seminar on volunteerism changed my perspective. I know learned that one should not volunteer to feel good, to change others' opinion who are in need for help, or to impose my ideas...it is just the needs of others that are important. ”



The evaluation by the Speakers

Faculty Demographics:

- Number of total evaluation= 30
- Average age=: 53,1
- Gender: Women=8 Men=20
- Occupation: Academicians= 17; Retired Academician= 5; Others= 8

Looking at the data from the speakers, we can summarize the answers with the following themes:

- To share/distribute their knowledge/field of expertise / research with the general public
- To increase awareness in the community about crucial matters for the society
- To accomplish my role as a faculty member in community service and to contribute to the university's role in that sense
- Presenting ideas/ research findings to general public is a challenging but rewarding task
- To keep themselves up-to-date on their own scholarship...



The evaluation by the Speakers

Looking at the data from the speakers, we can summarize the answers with the following themes:

- It was good to present my ideas to a wide range of people
- It contributed to accomplishing my role as a faculty member in community service
- It helped me learn more by myself to keep myself up-to-date
- I updated my knowledge in the field to present more recent information about my topic



Our Overall Inferences

PUBLIC:

- Created curiosity / supported Intrinsic Motivation to learn
- To learn about academia
- To increase professional knowledge / personal expertise
- To benefit from METU known as one of the best universities in the region

UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS:

- Sharing their research & helping to increase some awareness in public on their field of expertise
- Serving university's role on community development
- Improve their knowledge/ keep themselves up-to-date on their topics

UNIVERSITY 's COMMUNITY SERVICE ROLE:

Through Continuous Education Center (SEM), which provides paid certificate programs / seminars, the university is able to reach out public, provide free seminars & attempt to contribute to the community development & increasing social capital



Suggestions

- Setting up expectations clearly by introducing the seminars on SEM website
- Provide some categories for the seminars (practical vs. Technical)
- Provide brief information on the speakers
- Provide better sound systems in the classes
- Repeating some of the most popular sessions
- Reach out better to get more public involved
- More time for the discussions and Q+As
- Better logistics (How to get there, bus services, campus map, break time, friendlier registration system)



References

- Drago-Severson, E. (2004). *Becoming adult learners: Principles and practices for effective development*. New York: Teachers College Press
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- Merriam, S. B. & Kee, Y. (2014). Promoting Community Well-being: The case for Lifelong Learning for Older Adults. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64(2), 128-144.



Thank you very much for your valuable time!!!

