Colours of Dementia

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Dementia and Ageing

~ 24 million people living with dementia worldwide  (Label, 2013)

In Hong Kong

~ 103,433 (2009)
~ 332,688 (2039)
    increased by 222%  (Yu et.al, 2012)
Coping with Dementia and Ageing

promote active ageing
maintain a healthy brain

Measures in preparing society to accept and care for the elderly

College students are the future leaders
Service-learning
“A competency-based service learning is a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community”.

(Bringle and Clayton 2012, pp. 114-115)
Service-learning

credit-bearing
specific knowledge (rectification, application)
identified needs in community
unconventional learning environment
unexpected intellectual and emotional challenges
learning experience – unique and personal benefits all parties involved
An integrated Service-learning Research Scheme

Art and Well Being –

Subject knowledge: the intrinsic nature of art
- Art as a language
- Art for expression and communication
Art and Dementia

Art making relies on senses that transcend cognitive and intellectual limitations. Emotional memory/cognitive memory, heightened visual perception/deprived cognition.

Clinical findings

- **creative ability** remains in dementia
- images produced are revelation of memory and imagination
- visualization of thoughts and feelings
- recognized by relatives, appreciated by carers
- a connection between the dementia and others
- individuality and personhood
Hung Tung
The old man painter
Taiwan
Memories in the making
Alzheimer’s Association
Art Companion in Alzheimer
Colours of Dementia

Colours refers to the images produced

- traces of the individuality

- a non-verbal channel that connects the world of dementia when words and language are increasingly failing to communicate
Objectives

• encourage behavioural activation in persons with early dementia through artistic creativity;
• improve the quality of life of persons with early dementia through the joy and fun of art making;
• forge a better alliance between persons with early dementia and their relatives and carers through recognition of the images created;
• enhance the students’ understanding of dementia;
• promote communication and connection between the students and the elderly;
• improve the students’ social awareness of the social issues related to ageing;
• promote the students’ sense of civic engagement and social commitment.
Intended learning Outcomes

For the **dementia**, they will gain:
- joyful experiences of art making; and
- a **better expression** of their feelings and thoughts through creativity.

For the **relatives and carers**, they will attain:
- a **better understanding** of the feelings and state of mind of the service clients;
- a **better connection** to the service clients through better knowledge (or rediscovery) of the dementia
Intended learning Outcomes

For the students, they will achieve:

- the realisation of art as a language for expression and communication;
- an actualization of using art as facilitation to help people in need;
- a better understanding of dementia;
- a better connection to elderly people;
- a greater awareness of the social issues related to ageing;
- an experience of great satisfaction through teamwork;
- a greater flexibility and ability to solve problems.
Structure

Specific service group – NGOs, early dementia

Training and pre-service preparation
• 10 to 12 hours of art facilitation training by professional artists
• pre-site visit (concerns of space and constraints)
• basic research about dementia

Service sessions
The students are required to design, conduct, review, evaluate a series of 6 to 8 well structured creative workshops based on a clear theoretical framework and identified objectives.
Assessment

- pre- and post-service questionnaires designed by the Office of Service-Learning;
- well-documented session plans;
- students’ feedback and reflections gathered during two consultations with the faculty and staff of the Office of Service-Learning;
- a group report-back presentation;
- an individual reflective essay submitted at the end of the service.
Conclusion

Colours of Dementia

is to provide college students a personal and emotional experience with early dementia, and connects them to elderly people through joyful creativity.

• art connects
• service-learning engages
• a natural, unique learning experience outside classroom
“Education should foster students’ natural desire to give out, to do, to serve.”

(Dewey, 1990, p.15)
Thank You!