


Research
Based
Curricula



**Dementia: The Ageing
Brain and the Role of
Participatory Arts**
Key Stage 4 Psychology
Resource 5

2019



Resource Five Overview



Topic	Dementia, Society and the Role of Participatory Arts
GCSE Modules	Social influence, relationships, and change
Objectives	<p>By the end of this resource, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Define what a dementia-friendly community is✓ Identify steps that can be taken to make a community more dementia-friendly✓ Define what participatory arts are✓ Differentiate between participatory arts approaches and therapy approaches✓ Use creative research methods (photography) to capture the experiences of people in creative activities.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the data source2. Complete the activities3. Explore the further reading
Context	<p>People with dementia are capable of living normal, fulfilling and meaningful lives, just like any one of us without it. However, to enable this to be achieved, some additional support is necessary from individuals, communities and societies. A beneficial way of reaching out to people with dementia is by creating dementia-friendly communities and ensuring that there are enriching and engaging activities available to members of the public who may otherwise feel isolated and excluded. The following data source will consider ways in which this can be done, including an insight into my research on participatory arts.</p>

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Data Source



Section A

Dementia-Friendly Communities

The following information is from the Alzheimer's Society website (2019):

"A dementia-friendly community is a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported. Dementia-friendly communities are vital in helping people live well with dementia and remain a part of their community. Too many people affected by dementia feel society fails to understand the condition they live with, its impact or how to interact with them. That's why people with dementia sometimes feel they need to withdraw from their community as the condition progresses."

Figure 17
The Dementia Friends Advertising Logo



The Alzheimer's Society offer advice to communities and organisations for aiding them in becoming more dementia-friendly. Some small changes they could make include:

- Create a local group called a local dementia-friendly alliance led by people from the community helping to identify areas for local action (the Alzheimer's Society have some suggestions on their website for areas to consider).
- Help organisations – such as banks and supermarkets – receive training on how to effectively communicate and help customers with dementia
- Raise awareness by becoming dementia friends, accessing Alzheimer's Society training or conducting lessons in schools (this is something that someone like you could consider doing!)
- Visit services such as Alzheimer's Society Memory cafés or Singing for the Brain groups
- Host community events where people with dementia are invited

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Local initiatives are very important to people with dementia, particularly because the funding for dementia-friendly activities is limited. This is why activities that are run in the local community are really beneficial to people with dementia and can help the “live well”. There are various different ways that people with dementia can be welcomed into communities but the area I am most interested in is creative activity – in particular, participatory arts. My PhD research project is based in a dementia-friendly organisation that offers participatory arts to members of its local community who are affected by dementia – both people with a diagnosis and their family or caregivers.

Section B

Participatory Arts

Participatory arts activities are creative activities that aim to promote health and wellness. They are normally led by professional artists or creative practitioners and can include music, visual arts and crafts, drama, poetry, storytelling, dance, movement, photography or film-making. They are distinctly different from therapy – such as music, art or drama therapy – for three main reasons: a) therapies are conducted by trained therapists, unlike participatory arts; b) therapies normally have an end goal of ‘psychological change’ for their ‘clients’, while participatory arts focus more on the process of members taking part rather than on the measurable health outcomes; and c) therapies are often one-to-one and commonly take place in clinical or nursing home settings, while participatory arts are almost always group-based and take place in community settings, such as museums and theatres.

Participatory arts aim to promote health and wellbeing without being constituted as a ‘therapy’. In a 2014 review by Zeilig, Killick and Fox on arts-based participation for people with dementia, they define participatory arts as “...professional artists [or creative practitioners] that conduct

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creative or performing arts programs in community settings for the purpose of promoting health and wellness” (2014: 13). Hence, any creative activity that has relevant participatory or interactive elements and is conducted by a suitable facilitator could be considered under the broad participatory arts umbrella. Performing arts activities, which are commonly referred to within published literature, come under the participatory arts umbrella. They are also primarily concerned with active participation while promoting health and wellness through specific activities such as drama, dance and singing; activities within which an audience is normally required. However, participatory arts also include activities that are active or participative but lack audience or performance-based elements, such as writing or visual art. Hence, participatory arts are a broader concept that include the less performative but nonetheless participatory visual and literary group-based activities that performing arts exclude.

Below are some sample images of participatory activities taken during my research project and descriptions of the activities taking place within them:



This image was taken during ‘World Food Week’ where participants were tasked with making something out of dough. This participant started talking to us about his childhood of baking fruit cakes for his family – this was something we didn’t know about the participant before the activity began.

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This image was taken during 'County and Western' week, where a variety of different props were put on the table and passed around the group. Some participants enjoyed pretending to play the banjo and doing Clint Eastwood impersonations.



This image shows an activity between a husband and wife, where they are working together to create a cloak inspired by 'Joseph and his Technicolor Dream Coat'. Although they had creative differences, they found ways to work as a team to complete their piece!

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Data Source




Finally, this image was taken during 'Weddings and Marriages' week. A quiet participant was very captivated by the vintage wedding dresses worn by the facilitators and enjoyed touching and stroking the material. She also started counting the bows on one of the dresses. This demonstrates the usefulness of costume and props for bringing a theme or topic to life, in a way that participants can relate to.

Resource Five Activities



- Activities**
1. Define what a dementia-friendly community is.
 2. Identify three ways that members of the community can make their local village, town or city more dementia-friendly.
 3. Define what participatory arts are.
 4. What are some of the differences between participatory arts approaches and therapy approaches?
 5. Brainstorm a creative a list of potential themes or activities you could do if you were running a participatory arts group for people with dementia. Take some inspiration from the photographs above or think of your own hobbies and how you could make them relevant to people affected by dementia. Display them in a table, such as below:

Theme	Activity
Food week 	Make art using dough



6. Create a photo essay of something you enjoy – this could be anything from a hobby like football or music, to time with family or friends (just make sure that no photographs are taken of people without their consent). Aim for up to five photographs. Take them as creatively as you like. Use the research photographs from this data source as inspiration. For each photograph, write a short caption about what it portrays and why you took the photograph. This task will introduce you to creative research methods that can be used in academic research.

Resource Five

Further Reading



Explore



Read

Read the full journal paper by Young, Camic and Tischler who review participatory arts for dementia: Young, R., Camic, P. M., & Tischler, V. (2016). The impact of community-based arts and health interventions on cognition in people with dementia: A systematic literature review. *Aging & mental health*, 20(4), 337–351.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13607863.2015.1011080>

Read the full journal paper by Zeilig, Killick and Fox on participative arts for dementia: Zeilig, H., Killick, J. & Fox, C. (2014) The participative arts for people living with a dementia: a critical review. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, 9 (1), 7–34. <http://www.ep.liu.se/ej/ijal/2014/v9/i1/14-238/ijal14-238.pdf>

Visit the Alzheimer’s Society Dementia Friends initiative webpage to read a list of recognise dementia friendly communities:

<https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WebArticle?page=dfc-public-listing#.XH-1uij7TIV>

Watch

Watch this video about the Alzheimer’s Society ‘Singing for the Brain’ music activity group:

[Singing for the Brain](#)

Do

If you liked the look of the ‘Singing for the Brain’ video above, consider finding your local Singing for the Brain group and join as a volunteer.

Become a Dementia Friend. It is simple to do – complete some tasks online and receive a dementia friend badge and booklet information in the post.



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