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**Dementia: The Ageing  
Brain and the Role of  
Participatory Arts**  
Key Stage 4 Psychology  
Resource 6

2019



# Resource Six Overview



Topic	The Benefits of Using Participatory Arts for People with Dementia
GCSE Modules	Humanistic psychology, relationships, analysing data
Objectives	<p>By the end of this resource, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Explore the potential benefits of participatory arts activities for people with dementia</li><li>✓ Summarise key findings of research papers</li><li>✓ Better understand ways of summarising and displaying research findings</li><li>✓ Critically analyse the content of research reviews and papers on dementia and participatory arts activities</li></ul>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the data source</li><li>2. Complete the activities</li><li>3. Explore the further reading</li></ol>
Context	<p>It can be difficult to summarise the benefits that participatory arts activities can have for people with dementia, given that there are so many different ways that participatory arts can be used: singing songs, playing percussion instruments, writing stories, acting out a scene from a play, painting, creating a mosaic etc.</p> <p>Given the various ways that participatory arts can be applied to promote health and wellbeing, I decided to conduct a literature review and summarise the findings that previous researchers have gained from their own studies in this area. The papers I analysed, reviewed and summarised came under the following criteria:</p> <p>The remainder of this resource contains small extracts from my review results, which offer examples of how participatory arts may or may not benefit people with dementia, in addition to a glimpse of academic review writing in progress. The data source includes a table of summarised papers, as well as written extracts.</p>

# Resource Six

## Data Source



Author(s), Year and Country of Publication	Study Aim or Purpose	Arts Intervention(s) and Research Setting	Key Findings
2. Belver et al (2017); Spain.	To design and evaluate an arts activity programme, based at Prado Museum, for people with dementia; determine if the activities have an effect on participants.	'We Have a Date with Art' artistic activity programme based on visits to Prado Museum following the MoMA model – a) visiting culturally significant art and discussing them with each other, and b) attending an art-making workshop.	Participants showed reactions of engagement, good humour and satisfaction. There were also positive effects on their general mood and social relationships, combating social isolation. Their cognitive decline did not affect their participation.
3. Burnside, Knecht, Hopley and Logsdon (2015); USA.	To explore the impact of a museum-based arts program called here:now (described as experiential arts) on people with dementia and carers	'here:now' program, based on the MoMA model, consisting of monthly 90-minute discussions and 120-minute art classes conducted in Frye Museum.	The program encouraged high levels of engagement, social relations and mindfulness with both people with dementia and their carers; hence it was considered as well-received. Other themes that were identified in interviews were enjoyment, joint respite, personhood, relationship normalising and personal growth. Based on interview comments, the art-making had a greater impact than the single gallery tour experience. The results led to the design of a conceptual model of participant experience.
4. Camic, Williams and Meeten (2013); UK.	To determine whether participating in a community singing group can have a positive impact on people with dementia and their carers.	'Singing Together Group' facilitated by qualified community musician. Weekly 90 minutes sessions for a period of 10 weeks.	Slow deterioration in cognitive ability, daily living activity skills and behaviour through the course of the study. Their QoL rating and carers' rating remained stable. Engagement levels were high and attendance was strong. The group promoted wellbeing for all participants according to qualitative data.  Standardised questionnaires failed to detect impact in comparison to qualitative data. Small sample size and short study.

# Resource Six

## Data Source



<p>8. Flatt et al (2015); USA.</p>	<p>To describe the subjective experience of older adults with early stage of Alzheimer's/ dementia and family carers during art museum activity</p>	<p>Four art museum engagement activity sessions based on the MoMA model, conducted at The Andy Warhol Museum.</p>	<p>84% of participants said the group met their expectations. 89% said that they attend the activity group again. On average, the activity group was rated highly, at 4.51 out of 5. Participants rated making art as the most enjoyable aspect of the group, closely followed by group interaction and the guided art discussion. Five overall themes were identified by thematically analysing the focus group data: cognitive stimulation; social connections; self-esteem; programmatic concerns and activity-related concerns; and logistical issues. Overall, the art museum activities were enjoyable and valuable for quality of life and wellbeing of participants.</p>
<p>9. Hafford-Letchfield (2013); UK.</p>	<p>To use a community-based comedy/drama project as an unconventional means to communicate with people with dementia, and to share outcomes and evaluations of using comedy in this context.</p>	<p>The Grange comedy project, encompassing four weeks of two-three hour once-weekly workshops, using a mockumentary approach of unscripted, improvised acting with humour and parody.</p>	<p>Encouraging and working with humour was therapeutic for people with dementia. The comedy project encouraged a focus of 'being in the moment'. Relationships developed between family carers and staff members. Additionally, relationships between dementia participants were strengthened through creative activities. Comedy challenged dementia stereotypes and encouraged the use of social skills.</p>

# Resource Six

## Data Source



<p>15. Petrescu, MacFarlane and Ranzijn (2014); Australia.</p>	<p>To test the effectiveness of writing poetry on functioning (psychological) in people with early stages of dementia.</p>	<p>Poetry workshop led by researcher (lecturer in poetry and published poet), involving different types of poetry, techniques, brainstorming, homework, and participants' reading their own poetry to group. Participants asked for a published book of their work.</p>	<p>Results indicate that poetry interventions may be useful, amongst other activities, for optimising engagement with life for people in early stages of dementia. They may enhance quality of life for those with dementia. Each participant had a different emphasis based on their responses (some enjoyed it while others were hesitant; two in particular would have liked the intervention to last longer). Poetry or writing workshops may tap talents that have not been realised. More ongoing support would be needed to achieve full effectiveness in poetry workshops.</p>
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“Art-viewing and art-making activity programmes are commonly designed for people with dementia. With regards to effectiveness, the art-viewing-art-making papers demonstrated a positive effect on engagement and the relationships of participants with dementia (Burnside et al, 2015; Belver et al, 2017). In particular, the interventions encouraged good attendance, increased art engagement, improved social relationships and the utility of good humour. In some papers with multiple activity types, participants tended to rate art-making activities more highly than art-viewing (Burnside et al, 2015; Flatt et al, 2015). This suggests that interactive activities are more highly enjoyed than passive activities, though the art-viewing activities are still shown to manifest positive outcomes; for instance, in one study both object-handling and art-viewing activities led to increased subjective wellbeing while refreshment breaks did not have an impact. This suggests that it is not the social interaction alone of participatory arts activities that offers benefits to members, but that the creative activity is intrinsically beneficial, or is at least useful when combined within a social setting.”

# Resource Six

## Data Source



"Music-based interventions were found to increase confidence, engagement and attention levels (e.g. Camic et al, 2013) and decrease social isolation. While the positive outcomes relating to engagement, behaviour and mood were generally consistent, effectiveness for cognitive purposes was less concrete across the music-based papers. Some researchers found improvements in memory and general cognition, while others stated that memory problems and cognitive decline were noticed by carers over the intervention period (Camic et al, 2013). This highlights that the main purpose of participatory arts is not to improve memory or reverse dementia symptoms, but to encourage interactions and inclusivity."

"Petrescu's poetry intervention was less performative but demonstrated the varied ways that poetry can be applied in a creative process for people with dementia. The unique inclusion of 'homework' in this intervention encourages the participatory arts activity to merge with everyday life activities, as opposed to the two being distinctly unconnected. Poetry interventions had mainly positive results, working to optimise the engagement of people with dementia, while also encouraging new or existing skills."

"In conclusion, my review has shown evidence that community-based participatory arts activities for people living with dementia can have a positive impact on their health, subjective wellbeing, mood and general everyday living. The majority of studies found that the experience of being part of a group –socialising with each other and building relationships – was a positive element of the participatory arts interventions that produced positive responses from participants that social activities could not do alone. Participants and carers indicated that group

# Resource Six

## Data Source



participation encouraged social inclusion and offered opportunities for non-verbal communication and exchange of emotions. This social inclusivity and group setting are integral to all participatory arts interventions and programmes, regardless of which arts activity is being pursued, and has an impact on wellbeing and quality of life of people with dementia. The effectiveness of group-based activities for people with dementia indicates the potential of participatory arts interventions over individualised, client-based therapies to develop and maintain healthy social skills through creative engagement that can enhance behaviour and wellbeing."

# Resource Six Activities

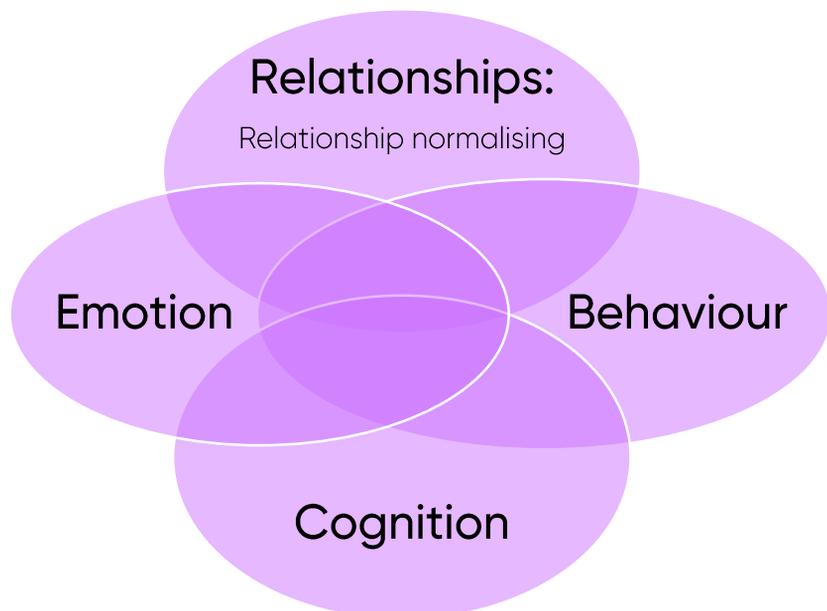


## Activities

1. Using the summary table of selected participatory arts papers for people with dementia, answer the following questions:

- What was the aim of Camic, Williams and Meeten's (2013) research project on the 'Singing Together' activity group?
- Describe what was involved in the poetry intervention that Petrescu et al (2014) were investigating.
- Define the Grange comedy project researched by Hafford-Letchfield (2013).
- Summarise all of the key findings from papers that come under the category of 'art-viewing-art-making'.

2. Using a visual diagram of your choice (such as a Venn diagram or spider diagram), categorise the benefits of participatory arts activities into the following categories: a) behaviour; b) relationships; c) cognition and d) emotions. Include additional categories if you think it is necessary. An example is shown below.



# Resource Six Activities



- Activities**
3. Critically analyse information from the summary table and written extract. Write an essay on the benefits of participatory arts activities for people with dementia, including aspects of activities that may not have resulted in positive outcomes.

# Resource Six

## Further Reading



### Explore



### Read

Read some of the full papers that were used in my literature review. You can find them on Google Scholar. Examples below:

Belver, M.H., Ullán, A.M., Avila, N., Moreno, C. and Hernández, C., 2017. Art museums as a source of well-being for people with dementia: an experience in the Prado Museum, Arts & Health, pp.1-14.

Burnside L.D., Knecht, M.J., Hopley, E.K. and Logsdon, R.G., 2017. Here:now – Conceptual model of the impact of an experiential arts program on person with dementia and their care partners. *Dementia*, 16(1), pp.29-45.

Camic, P.M., Williams, C.M. and Meeten, F., 2013. Does a 'Singing Together Group' improve the quality of life of people with a dementia and their carers? A pilot evaluation study. *Dementia*, 12, pp.157-176.

### Watch

Watch an excerpt of Henry from 'Alive Inside' documentary about music for people with dementia:

['Alive Inside'](#)

### Do

Spend some time this week doing something creative – whether that be drawing, inventing new products, making music or dancing. While you are doing this activity, be mindful of how you feel during it. Write a short diary entry after you take part in a creative activity and consider what was positive/negative about the experience.



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