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Case studies: Learning Scenario 1 Colouring in activity

Introduction to the location and our partners

Location:

Castletown House in Co. Kildare, Ireland is a Palladian mansion built in 1722. It is surrounded by extensive parklands that are well used by the local community. The house has a wealth of artefacts and art works that tell the story of the house and it's occupants. It also has rooms suitable for art making and the psychological assessments.

There were five OPW tour guides working on the AIDA team. All five were trained in the Azure methodology of running slow looking art tours for people living with dementia. The AIDA team worked in conjunction with the guide staff on site at Castletown House for assistance and information on the art and artefacts. They also provided additional engagement opportunities with other areas in the house. Each time we were in the house for a slow looking session, participants were introduced to other aspects of the house in a relaxed and casual manner. This increased their enjoyment of the experience and was particularly beneficial to the participants spouses.

Castletown House, Co Kildare, Ireland

Associate Partner:

We partnered with the **Alzheimer's Society of Ireland (ASI)** to recruit participants and support the AIDA sessions. ASI provided a support worker whose role was to support the participants to complete the session. She was also able to provide feedback and suggestions that have informed these case studies. This was a successful partnership and we hope to build on this relationship in the future to support future AIDA sessions in OPW sites.

We partnered with **Dr Louise Hopper at Dublin City University (DCU**) for the psychological aspects of the project. She prepared and submitted the Ethical Approval application for the Irish piloting, carried out the assessments in session 2 and session 7, anonymised the resulting data and submitted it to the AIDA project. An assistant psychologist and psychology student carried all the VAS assessments before and after each session,.

Dr Hopper has been invited to speak at the multiplier event at the conclusion of this project.

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Group 1 – Slow Looking Art Tour.

Participants:

3 participants plus spouses, a total of 6 people.

A group this size worked well in terms of how the group members got to know each other. All three couples swopped phone numbers, with a view to meeting up at a later date to visit other heritage sites.

Art work:

We looked at two paintings. The first painting depicted Henry Thorold as a soldier in the Crimean war and the second painting features Henry with his sister Maria Sophia as children.

Both paintings were located close to each other and to a third painting of Maria Sophia as an adult. The third painting was a reserve artwork for the tour.

The paintings were part of the Rossmore collection. This worked well in terms of telling a story through a series of related paintings.

Setting:

We located the chairs in a semi circle in front of the first painting. At the beginning of the slow looking tour, we invited people to step forward to have a closer look at the work. When we moved to look at the second painting, staff moved the chairs to the adjacent location.

Group 1: Connection question

If you were to have a portrait painted, who would be in it? where would the painting be set?

Learnings:

The painting of Henry as a soldier worked well. But the second painting of Henry and his sister did not work as well, as there were two large areas of black within the painting and one participant found it difficult to discern which was the person and which was the dog.

→ This was a poor choice of image as it posed problems for people with visual issues.

The general lighting in the area was not quite bright enough.

→ There was little scope to improve the lighting in area. Sometimes the nature and character of the heritage site prohibits alterations that will make it more accessible.

Spouses saw the art images in advance and anticipated what we were to see.

→ Turn the printouts of the art objects and artefacts turned upside down at the outset until you are ready to start.

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Group 1: colouring in session

Group 1 were offered a choice of two different sheets, Henry in his army uniform and Henry, Maria Sophia and their dog Divers. The sheets were printed on white and coloured papers. Printouts of the original paintings were on the table as people worked, so that they could be reminded of what they had seen.

Setting:

We sat everyone at the same table, to create a sense of social inclusion. One of the facilitators and the ASI support worker sat at the table with the participants. Each person chose their own colour scheme.

At the end of the session, participants were asked to give their picture a name/ title.

Here are some of the names chosen:

'Woof, Stars and Moon'
'Resting at the Seaside'
'Kilbride'

One participant named the facilitator's image:

'Balaklava'
Coloured in by a facilitator

'Balaklava' - this was the site of the British encampment during the Crimean War. Also Balaclava comes from head gear worn by soldiers there. A direct connection which we did not make till later.

Learnings:

There were too many art materials on the table. The table was cluttered.	Offer a more limited range of art materials.
There were too many staff members in the room. Some staff were simply there watching the workshop. Not all were needed at that time.	Consider the roles of each facilitator and limit those present to staff who have a role at that time.

Participant feedback:

'Those lines don't rule me'
A comment made by a **participant** who coloured outside the lines.

'I was not tired after my visit'
participant

'I liked being in the house and making pictures and the food'
participant

'This was something to do together'
spouse

''S' keeps all the extra colours sheets in a box and takes them out during the week to do more colouring in.'
spouse

'I told my family about coming to Castletown House'.
participant

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Group 2 – Slow Looking Heritage Tour.

Participants:
4 participants plus spouses, a total of 8 people.
The group engaged well with each other. Two couples swopped phone numbers to arrange further outings together. Within the slow looking sessions, a group of 8 people worked well in terms of space and room layout.

Heritage artefact:

We looked the Collen Coach and a selection of traps traditionally pulled by ponies.
The group were very engaged with the coach and the stories of the lives of those who had travelled in it.

Setting:

The first time we used the coach, we placed the seating back against the wall. However, we realised that it was difficult for some people to hear the tour as the space was tall and sound did not travel well. The second time we used the space, we put the chairs closer to the coach in a semi-circle.
Room temperature was cooler in this space than other parts of the building and we advised people to keep their coats on.

Group 2: Connection question

Where would you like to go on the coach? Who would you bring?

Learnings:

The sound dynamics were difficult in the stable, due to the height, layout and building materials.	Test out the seating layout in advance to ensure that everyone can see and hear everything.
One participant got tired as we walked through the stable area looking at the traps. Heritage properties often do not offer many opportunities to sit down.	Arrange some seating areas in advance or alternatively facilitators can move chairs into the areas with the group
Some spouses tended to jump ahead during the slow looking tour. They were eager to participate and enjoy the event themselves.	Where someone is jumping ahead of the methodology, we acknowledged their contribution and say that we would come back to that point. It is important that the facilitators do actually return to their point.

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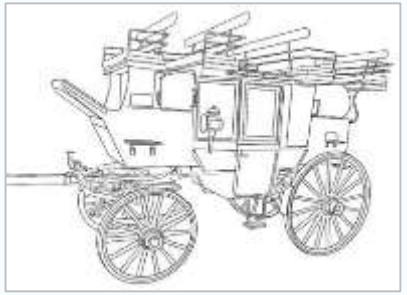
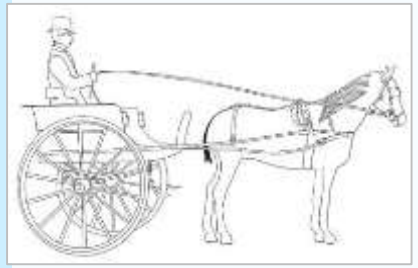
Group 2: colouring in session





Group 2 were offered the choice of the image of the coach or an image of a pony and trap with driver. The pony and trap proved more engaging. It provided the opportunity to name the driver and the horse and say where they were going. These became little stories.

Conversation flowed as people became more engaged in the activity. However, periods of silence were useful to allow people time to process what was happening around them.

At the end of the session, the participants named their pictures:
'Donabate, by the Seaside'
'Bono and Edge, bound for Westport'
'Dublin and Edmund, going home'
'Suba, Mrs Cullen down the road'

Note: the coach in the above image was coloured in by a facilitator

Learnings:

AIDA

Working with a group of 8 people around one workshop table was challenging.

Seating 8 people around a workshop table posed some space issues. However we decided against splitting the group across 2 tables, as this would interfere with the group dynamic.

Some spouses were initially slow to join in and needed a little encouragement.

During recruitment and at the outset of the sessions, it is important to be inclusive of both the participant and the carer. However, it is a balancing act to ensure that both parties are heard and acknowledged.

Participant and spouse feedback

'I love that the colouring in sheets are age appropriate'.
spouse

'The coach was so pretty, I wanted to be in it'
participant

I loved that we concentrated on one object rather than seeing the whole house'
spouse.

'I thought we would see more of Castletown House'
spouse

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Challenges	Solutions
Data protection: To protect all personal data and comply with the requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulations.	1. Prepare a Data Flow Chart and Data Impact Assessment. 2. Alzheimer's Society of Ireland agreed to register and hold all participant data, we only recorded first names and contact phone numbers. These were stored in an OPW password protected computer. 3. All psychological data was held securely by Dublin City University and communicated directly to Fondazione Patrizio Paoletti for research purposes. All names were removed and replaced by unique participant codes. 4. The data protection provisions were discussed with participants when they sign the project consent forms with the psychology team. 5. The guides also discussed the data protection procedures with the participants and their families at the first session. We wanted them to feel comfortable that this was a safe place.
Working with other staff on at the heritage site: They will be able to contribute to the sessions.	1. Other staff onsite should be trained in dementia awareness, as they may have contact with the participants at different times. They may be assisting the group moving around the site. We found that onsite staff were happy to engage with participants and their families, telling them additional stories about the house. 2. Engaging with other onsite staff (outside the facilitator group) is also very useful when designing the sessions and how they will operate. They will have more in-depth knowledge of the heritage site. 3. Share general feedback from the sessions with the wider staff group at the heritage site. This helped build an understanding of the sessions with the whole organisation and support future sessions.

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Challenges	Solutions
Issues around recruitment of volunteers for the study. How to decide who to include.	1. Recruitment for the sessions was dictated by the terms of the study. We were looking for people who were living with mild to moderate forms of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. We needed a commitment to attend the sessions with their carer or family member and both people would engage with the program. 2. We were contacted by a woman who felt she had some symptoms of cognitive impairment but chose not to attend for an assessment for dementia with her GP. She was living independently at home. We did not include her in the study group as she did not have a diagnosis. Her personal assessment of her situation was not sufficient to meet the terms of the study. However, there would be no reason to exclude her from sessions that were run as part of an education programme in a heritage site. 3. We were contacted by a woman whose husband was in a nursing home. He had not been functioning well at home and she had recently taken the difficult decision to place him a care setting. All he wanted to do was to lie in bed and eat sweets. She takes him out once a week for a dementia choir. He is still able to remember hymns from is childhood. She said that she felt his dementia was more advanced. We discussed what the program would involve and she felt that he would not be able to manage the tours and activities.
Promoting your event How to reach your target audience	1. Create links with organisations that assist people living with dementia and their families, such as the local Alzheimer's society. Invite staff from the Alzheimer's societies to attend the sessions. This will help them understand what is on offer and relay the information to the most appropriate people through their care assistants, newsletters and events. 2. Contact local community groups such as an Alzheimer's choir or dementia café and ask permission to come and talk to their group about what you have to offer. 3. Use social media to advertise the sessions. However, social media alone will probably not reach sufficient numbers of participants.

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Challenges	Solutions
Photographing the sessions and the outputs: Consider whether to take photographs of the participants art works. These can be used to record the work carried out, be part of the final report of the project or be used to create digital galleries of the project.	1. Taking photographs of the art works produced by participants can only be done with the person's permission. Where someone has dementia, it can be difficult to establish whether they are giving informed consent. If the photograph is to be used in a report or to create digital galleries, the permission must be for the stated use. It also needs to be a continuing permission for the image to be retained and used into the future. 2. The challenge with recording people's work is to retain the focus on the process of creating the art and not focus on the output. If we take photos (subject to permissions) then people will see the output as the way their work is recorded. They may feel self conscious of how their image looks and be open to feelings of self-criticism. One participant recalled during the session feeling that he was no good at art because of comments made to him by a teacher while in school over 60 years ago. 3. In this project, we decided not to feature participants finished photographs of the output. We suggested instead that the participants take the art works home and show them to family members. This helps them to maintain control of their own work.
Refreshments: These are useful to help keep everyone's energy up. They are also an important social moment for participant and family members to connect with each other.	1. If refreshments are being served, the timing needs to be build into the session planning. 2. The social aspect of eating and drinking together is an important time to engage with others and build social connections for the future. 3. Sometimes when people are eating and drinking, they get comfortable with the social setting and may find the transition back to an activity difficult. 4. Sometimes people may not be able to carry on an art activity at the same time as eating and drinking. 5. Having drinks on the table at the same time as the art materials could result in a spill that might embarrass someone who feels self conscious.

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Challenges	Solutions
Accessibility to the AIDA Sessions: Some heritage sites are not suitable for wheelchairs or mobility scooters.	1. Castletown House has a car park beside the stable block where the sessions met. We arranged for participants to have access to the car park. Public transport was about 15 minutes walk away. When we were recruiting participants, we informed them of the transport options. 2. We informed people at the recruitment stage that the site was not suitable for wheelchairs or mobility scooters. This was also mentioned in the recruitment flyer.
Participants may have visual or hearing issues.	1. When you are taking bookings, check whether anyone has visual or hearing issues. 2. At the first session, check if anyone has hearing issues. It may be necessary to position them so that you are on their better side for hearing. 3. Ensure that all colouring in sheets have strong lines and are printed on a series of different colours, so that participants can choose which they find easiest to see. 4. Ensure the object of the slow looking tour is easily visible. 5. At the outset of the slow looking tour, check with everyone that they can see and hear everything.
Participants or spouses may get tired. On one occasion, a participant went to sit on a historic chair and had to be stopped by his wife and a staff member.	1. Be mindful of the people's energy levels. 2. We brought some chairs with us as we moved into different areas, so that participants always had somewhere to sit down. 3. Refreshments will also help keep people's energy levels up.

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Challenges	Solutions
Some people will find the words 'dementia' or 'Alzheimer's' difficult to accept.	1. Some participants or family members may be uncomfortable with the words 'Alzheimer's' or 'dementia' either because they are unaware of the diagnosis or unhappy with the fact that they are being labelled as such. 2. We were aware of two participants that had an issue with these words. We agreed with the guides, ASI and DCU staff not to use these words. 3. It was however an issue with the consent forms and the title of the project. We had to explain the project in very general terms; we said we were researching whether people find it helpful to engage with arts and heritage.
Some participants may have different carers attending the sessions. One participant was supported on different occasions by her husband, daughter and carer. It may have meant that the couple were less engaged with the process.	1. This is the reality of caring for people living with dementia. Spouses need to be supported by wider family members and carers. 2. In these circumstances, it is useful to stay in touch with the spouse with updates on what was included in each session.
Consider how to encourage people to continue their creative journey.	1. Prepare some additional colouring in sheets and art materials to give participants and spouses or carers to bring home. 2. In the group, we discussed how they can continue to explore their creativity in their daily lives. 3. Encourage participants and spouses to display their art work for friends and family to admire.

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Challenges	Solutions
Not everyone who volunteered for the study was suitable. How to decide who to include	1. Recruitment for the sessions was dictated by the terms of the study. We were looking for people who were living with mild to moderate forms of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. We needed a commitment to attend the sessions with their carer or family member and both people would engage with the program. 2. We were contacted by a woman who felt she had some symptoms of cognitive impairment but chose not to attend for an assessment for dementia with her GP. She was living independently at home. We did not include her in the study group as she did not have a diagnosis. Her personal assessment of her situation was not sufficient to meet the terms of the study. However, there would be no reason to exclude her from sessions that were run as part of an education programme in a heritage site. 3. We were contacted by a woman whose husband was in a nursing home. He had not been functioning well at home and she had recently taken the difficult decision to place him a care setting. She takes him out once a week for a dementia choir. She said that she felt his dementia was more advanced. We discussed what the program would involve and she felt that he would not be able to manage the tours and activities.
Promoting your event to reach your target audience.	1. Create links with organisations that assist people living with dementia and their families, such as the local Alzheimer's society. Invite staff from the Alzheimer's societies to attend the sessions. This will help them understand what is on offer and they will be able to explain what is involved to their clients. 2. Contact local community groups such as Alzheimer's choirs or dementia cafés and ask permission to come and talk to their group about what you have to offer. 3. Use social media to advertise the sessions. However, social media alone will probably not reach sufficient numbers of participants.

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