

Appendix A:

Me Myself and Manet

Evaluation report: Community projects (Phase 1)

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Flow

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ASHMOLEAN

MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



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1 Introduction

From September 2014 to July 2015 the Manet portrait was used to inspire a series of community workshops working with audiences who were either newly engaged, or that the Ashmolean wanted to test new ways of working with. The initial aims for the project were:

- To enable participants to engage with the museum on a deeper level, improving confidence with visiting the museum, and museums in general.
- To enable participants to see the value of learning throughout their lives, and that it can happen outside of a school or institution.

The community engagement elements of the Manet project all came under the project title 'Me Myself and Manet' and were led by Nicola Bird who is part of the Oxford University Museums team, working on a part time basis to engage community groups with all the museums in this group.

Nicola worked closely with the Ashmolean's Learning department to plan and schedule the programme, planning the projects in detail, in partnership with the community groups involved. She was responsible for the delivery of all five community projects, managing the budget and organising additional support from artists or other staff where needed.

The project was designed to reflect and build on the lessons learned through each stage, starting with three 'light touch' projects between September and November 2014, which Nicola used to establish ways of working and test different levels of

engagement. This enabled the team to run two 'in-depth' projects between January and July 2015, and these in turn have helped shape the final Artist-led project in the Autumn of 2015.

A further community project with Age UK was planned, but it was felt that three in-depth projects would be too many to develop fully, as the audiences for both Highfield and YDUK were very specialist with complex needs.

Each of the partners involved in the community projects had their own specific aims, and these along with the opportunities presented through exploring the portrait shaped the focus and plans for activities.

The length and intensity of each project was varied depending on the participants' needs and the aims of the partner organisation, and each had a different artistic focus inspired by the painting of Mlle Claus. They all culminated in an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in which the three light touch projects were displayed together in December 2014, and the two in-depth projects followed in June 2015. The five projects shared a blog where progress was recorded together.

Full details of the five community projects can be found in the Case Studies. In the next section we have briefly summarised the aims, focus and activity to provide context for the outcomes and impacts evidenced for the participants, partner organisations and Ashmolean team which can be seen in the following section.

1.2 Snapshot project outlines

Budding Oxford Parents (BOP).

Group at The Roundabout Centre for young parents and their families.

Partner aim:

- Further enhancement of improved life outcomes for young children and their families, particularly those in greatest need.

Focus on the painting:

- Making Jewellery inspired by the painting and fashions of the time – a subject chosen by the participants during a preliminary session discussing the painting in June 2014.

Activity:

- Six sessions between September and October 2014, five of which took place at the Roundabout Children’s Centre in Barton, following a visit to the Ashmolean.
- Four young parents took part, all women under the age of twenty four.
- All sessions run by Nicola and jewellery artist Kate Coker.



Image - Project PicCollage created by Jessica about the project

1.2 Snapshot project outlines

Meadowbrook PRU.

Pupil Referral Unit working with young people who have been excluded from school.

Partner Aims:

- Contributing to impacts for the Pupil Referral Unit and Integration Service; participants and teachers learning to build confidence and tools for learning.
- Engaging participants with museums and learning in a positive way.

Focus on the painting:

- Using Manet as an artist and the portrait's style of Impressionism to explore painting techniques and Art History.

Activity:

- Seven sessions, most of which took place at 'Vision Arts', the art studio at Meadowbrook, which supports young people who have been excluded from education to achieve Arts Award and Art GCSE.
- Twelve young people took part during their weekly Art sessions, and they were also invited to visit the Ashmolean in smaller groups.
- Sessions run by local artist Dionne Freeman who runs Vision Arts, with support from Nicola who attended most of the sessions and hosted the visits to the Museum.



Image - One of the Meadowbrook students interpreting the painting

1.2 Snapshot project outlines

John Radcliffe Hospital School.

Working with children who are out of school due to illness or injury.

Partner aim:

- Enrichment of their provision of education for young people (school age) who are admitted to hospital.

Focus on the painting:

- The sessions focused on many aspects of the painting including Fanny Claus as a person - meeting an actress dressed as the sitter, Fanny Claus as a musician, and the 'bigger picture' imagining the rest of the scene through model making and iPad-based digital collage.

Activity:

- Fifteen sessions between September and November as part of a weekly Art group. The Hospital School supports the education of children who are staying in the hospital for a long period of time, so the sessions happened either in the art classroom or at their bedside.
- Sixty two children took part
- The sessions were run by Dionne Freeman who leads the Tuesday art group, with support from Nicola who visited on five occasions.



Image - A student at JR Hospital School creating a 3D collage

1.2 Snapshot project outlines

Young Dementia UK

A charity focused on providing one-to-one support for people with early onset dementia (e.g. aged 40's-60s, including FTDs/ Picks disease). Types of dementia affecting younger people can change behaviour, affect language, mobility or eyesight, and doesn't just affect memory.

Partner aim:

- Providing a stimulating and social activity for their members, increasing opportunities and contact time for people with a range of interests.

Focus on the painting:

- The collage sessions (*pictured right*) focused on the painting as a composition, while the music sessions explored more of the contextual information about the sitter and her life in Paris. The theme of 'Holiday' was chosen for the music session in response to the fact that Mlle Clause had just returned from a holiday, and to evoke happy memories for the participants.

Activity:

- This project took place solely in the Museum, differing from other projects which were largely outreach-based.
- A group of around twenty four people, including members and their support workers came to the museum for five sessions between April and May 2015.
- The sessions were very simple and focused, with an introductory visit, a two week art project and a two week music project.
- The short-term outcomes, or 'take outs' from each session were designed to work alone so that if anyone missed a session they wouldn't be left behind.
- The sessions were run by Nicola, with input from Oxford Concert Party and a visual artist.



1.2 Snapshot project outlines

Highfield Unit

A residential unit working with young people with acute mental health issues.

Partner aim:

- Contributing to the recovery and confidence of the young people, giving them a focus and opportunities to achieve in a safe environment.

Focus on the painting:

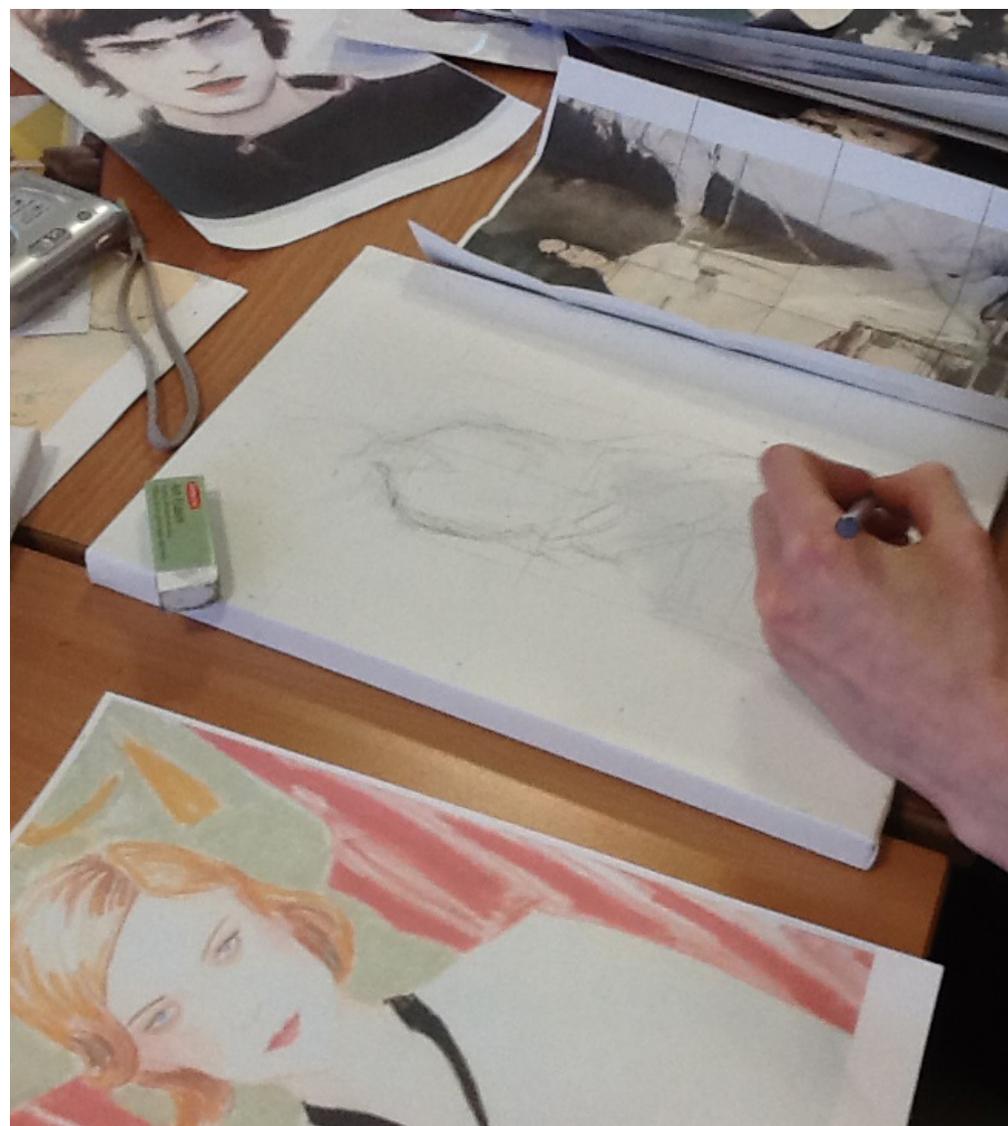
The full-size replica of the portrait was kept at the unit for 8 weeks, and used to inspire both the project activity, and further study in different curriculum subjects.

Activities included:

- Meeting an actress dressed as Fanny Claus.
- Using the portrait to discover how portraiture has developed in the past and how it is used at present (*pictured right*).
- Creating jewellery inspired by Mlle Claus and for her to wear.
- Creating digital animation and art inspired by the portrait
- Using the portrait to create a music collage of words and sounds.

Activity:

- Eleven sessions attended by fifteen participants in total, group sizes fluctuated between seven and ten
- Each session was designed to be stand-alone to allow for the unpredictability of the participants' illnesses.
- The sessions were used to help the young people to complete an Arts Award, with eight of them achieving a Discover Award, and five achieving Bronze.
- Staff at the Unit also used the portrait during French and music lessons.
- The sessions were run by Nicola, with input from various artists and musicians.



2 Outcomes and Impacts

Each of the five community projects had very positive outcomes for the participants, staff and organisations involved. By looking at ‘Me Myself and Manet’ as a whole we can see where the project has potential to impact on the Ashmolean team, and how each phase of the project has enabled the development of the next.

Our evaluation of the five community projects centres on the evidence of learning outcomes and the potential for longer-term impact, both for the participants, and the partner organisations. In telling the story of the emerging relationships between the participants and the Museum and portrait of Mlle Clause, we focus on a Narrative Learning Model of the following factors¹ :

Comfort and enjoyment as conditions for learning and change

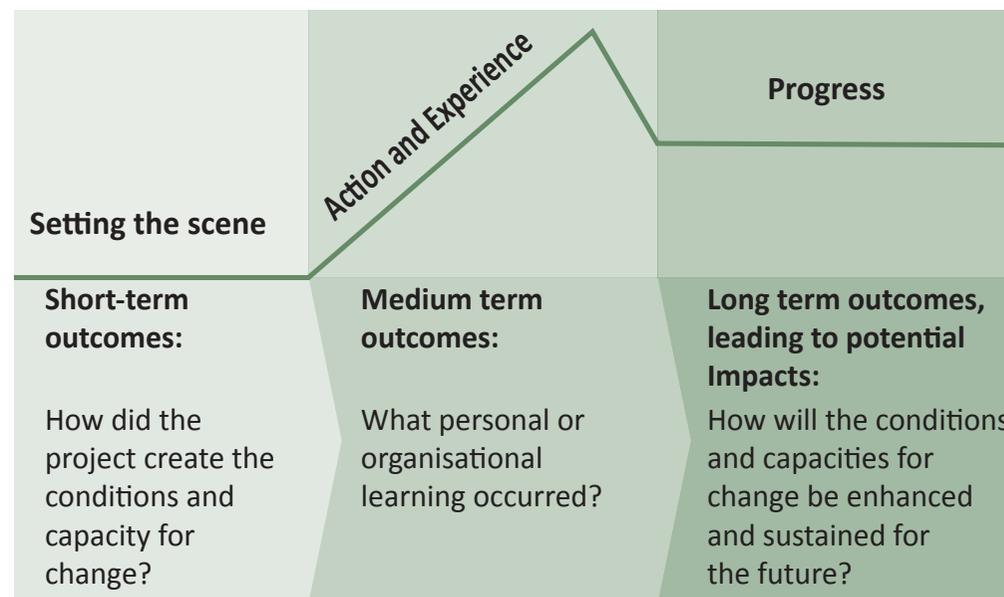
- These belong both at the beginning and end of a Narrative Learning Model, to show how the conditions and capacities for learning have both enhanced, and been enhanced by an intervention or experience.

Learning outcomes

We have broken these down to three types of knowledge:

- Knowing why (values, meanings)
- Knowing what (facts and contexts)
- Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

Through our evaluation we are telling a story, describing the project as a narrative with a beginning, middle and end. We use the simple model below to organise evidence of learning that has occurred along the way, and describe it in the very simplest terms.



The sections below outline these elements for the project as a whole, for specific information about each of the five projects, see the corresponding case studies.

1 Flow's adaptation of the ILFA Generic Learning Outcomes

2.1 Setting the scene: Creating the conditions and capacity for learning and change

For all of the five community projects, the efforts in this area have shone through as key to their success. As *Me Myself Manet* has progressed, insights from each partnership have shaped the next, and the three light touch projects clearly influenced the later in-depth projects. The below points are in relation to the five projects as a whole, with some specific examples to illustrate.

The input of *Mlle Claus*

The painting itself offered a wealth of inspiration, which has been discussed in depth in the main evaluation report, but it is worth noting here that the efforts made to draw out this inspiration and to consistently refer to the painting gave context to the projects, and a sense of purpose to the participants. For all of the projects the focus around the portrait acted as a 'way in' to many different skills, knowledge and experiences from digital art to music (*pictured*):

- The Meadowbrook students discovered Impressionism and exercised their own (sometimes critical) opinions on art and museums;
- The Young Mums found that time spent focusing on their jewellery-making while their children were being looked after gave them the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and interests;
- The Hospital School students focused on the portrait for a whole term during their art classes, exploring many different aspects, which catered for many different levels of ability and mobility;
- The Highfield students discovered new interests and nurtured talents;
- The YDUK members unlocked old skills and memories.



The importance of relationships, and time in setting up

All of the community projects began a long time before the first sessions started, with time and effort put in to building and nurturing the relationships between the Ashmolean team and partners. Nicola had worked with the Highfield Unit for three years before this project, and collaborated with Dionne Freeman on other projects through the Museum's Outreach team. She had only been working with YDUK for six to eight months in her capacity as outreach officer but spent three months taking a copy of the painting out to social groups and was able to use the insights learned from the other projects to help plan the sessions.

2.1 Setting the scene: Creating the conditions and capacity for learning and change

Consistency and a formative approach

The consistency of having Nicola as a dedicated project manager and facilitator was noted by all partners as highly important, along with specific feedback on her warm and friendly approach.

This consistency allowed for learning and insights to inform the development of subsequent projects. An example of this is the use of the same artists from one project to another. Kate Coker, the Jewellery artist was introduced by request of the young mums at BOP, and went on to deliver two sessions in the Highfield Unit project. The musicians from the Oxford Concert Party were able to adapt their approach following feedback from their involvement in the Hospital school, to provide an extremely successful element of the YDUK project.

YDUK was the last of the five projects and benefited from the hindsight of others, such as a clear brief for the artists involved, and the importance of providing lunch!



Kate Coker with the young mums at BOP (left) and later at the Highfields Unit (right)

A clear direction and focus

Nicola reflected after the first two light touch projects with BOP and Meadowbrook that despite her wanting to be very flexible about the themes and approach of the projects, the high level of guidance and structure that the participants needed called for a more focused project. This enabled her to shape her approach to the later light touch project with the Hospital School, and in turn fed into her planning for Highfield and YDUK. Both Highfield and YDUK cited the clear focus of the sessions due to the careful planning as being a key factor in the success of their projects.

Offering a variety of activities

Mandy from YDUK felt the sessions were empowering and gave YDUK members a feeling of independence. The variety of activities enabled more people to get involved, and held their attention, and for those who were less able to complete visual tasks, the music sessions gave them the opportunity to join in fully. The sessions also introduced a new type of activity for the members, who are more likely to do activities at home or outdoor trips than visit a new cultural place.

At Highfield the range of activities was designed to enable students who didn't necessarily think of themselves as 'arty' to get involved, particularly the boys in the group. Tina Pegg, the teacher leading on the project, wanted the focus to be on 'techniques' rather than finished outcomes, and to allow the young people to choose their own activities, which worked well.

At the Hospital School their whole term was focused on the painting, and Nicola's sessions brought in different people for the children to meet and activities to try.

2.1 Setting the scene: Creating the conditions and capacity for learning and change

Getting the basics right

There were also some very practical but essential factors for the success of the projects, many of which were down to the simple fact of being able to cover costs, or providing for people's needs, including:

- **Expenses:** By paying for transport and lunch the Ashmolean both encouraged and enabled more people to come, particularly for YDUK who do not have a central base, and many members came from far and wide.
- **Child care:** The biggest expense for the Young Mum's sessions was the cost of child care, but without this it would have been a very different project. The mums were able to focus on each other, providing peer support in the group.
- **The Learning Studio:** Being able to have the learning studio to themselves helped the YDUK group to relax and take part in the activities. It was also used for activities or debriefs for all the other groups who came, and became the venue for the launch events.
- **The painting:** The replica painting, despite being large and difficult to manoeuvre, went to all the venues during the project and provided inspiration and context. Staff and students alike enjoyed having it in their classroom at Highfield and it became part of their daily lessons.
- **Artists and specialists:** The projects featured many new skills and activities that couldn't have been delivered by the Ashmolean or partner staff themselves. By using the budget to pay for specialist skills this project has widened the possibilities for the participants.
- **Vouchers:** The Meadowbrook students were given vouchers for the café to use next time they came, with friends or family. This small gesture was very well received by the young people and Nicola reported that twenty out of thirty were used.
- **Blue badge parking:** Mandy from YDUK had been worried about getting the members to the sessions but was delighted that they were able to park right outside using their blue badges.

The importance of lunch!

This basic need deserves its own mention, as it became a central part of both the Young Mums and YDUK projects.

The Young Mums sessions ended with a shared lunch for the mums, their children, Nicola, Kate the jewellery artist and the Centre staff. They spent the time chatting about the project, and their own lives, much as they had in the sessions, but this time with the children present it was an opportunity for Nicola and Kate to get to know this other side to them. It also gave them something to look forward to, and an extra reason to come to the sessions.

The YDUK group had a lunch in the Ashmolean café each week. The group felt very special having lunch provided for them. This also helped the group, including the support workers, to socialise and relax together. Nicola observed that having lunch together each week helped to cement the group quickly and effectively, and Mandy commented that social time is highly valued by members and support workers alike.



2.1 Setting the scene: Creating the conditions and capacity for learning and change

Location, location, location

Most of the sessions took place in the community groups' own spaces, ensuring the participants were relaxed and engaged:

- **Meadowbrook**, the **Hospital school** and **Highfield** unit all had their sessions at the same time and place of their usual art sessions, bringing a different focus and variety to their time there but in a safe environment.
- The **Young Mums** use the Roundabout Centre mainly for their children's needs, so turning the child-centred classroom into an adult-centred work space gave a new dynamic and feel to the sessions.
- **YDUK** who do not have a regular meeting place visited the Museum for every session, but always used the Learning Studio and followed the same pattern for each session ending with a shared lunch.



Young parents at BOP using the classroom for their Jewellery sessions



Meadowbrook student visiting painting at the Ashmolean

2.2 Action/Experience: What learning occurred?

For the two in-depth projects, and to some extent the light touch ones, the complex needs of the participants mean that their personal development is more weighted towards their self-confidence and wellbeing than learning in a formal sense, and on creating the conditions for future engagement with art and education.

The below tables set out the learning experienced and observed for each group.

Oxfordshire Hospital School

Knowing what (facts and contexts)

The hospital school's emphasis is on social and emotional development, and teacher Caron Houchen felt the project enabled the participants to 'explore creative ideas and work collaboratively with others'.

They also created musical responses with the help of the Oxford Concert Party musicians who brought a range of world instruments linking to the fact that Fanny Claus was a professional violinist.

Knowing why (values and meanings)

Caron Houchen felt that the public display of the participants work in the exhibition reinforced their sense of achievement.

"Even those who lacked confidence were able to experience success and enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate their work with fellow pupils and with the wider community."
Caron Houchen

Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

The children created responses to the portrait, including imagined views from the sitter's point of view, fashion ideas, prints, 3D rooms using an iPad app, and scenes to show where she is sitting.

The 3d Box and Pic Collage activities in the October session was really engaging and the young people were able to generate ideas and make decisions easily. They really enjoyed putting themselves into their own room.

2.2 Action/Experience: What learning occurred?

Meadowbrook Pupil Referral Unit

Knowing what (facts and contexts)

One student commented on the difference between the real painting and the copy they had been shown at school, pointing out the brighter colours, textures and brush marks in the real thing.

Another student voiced her dislike of many things during the visit, but was able to do so eloquently and remarked on the similarities between Manet and Banksy, commenting on how they pushed boundaries and used new styles in art.

"Simon, Jaime, Dionne and I had a forty five minute discussion on art, the art market, value, art movements and styles. Dionne was impressed with the students explaining having a discussion for this amount of time was a real positive step for them. Their opinions and views were challenged, they were asked to de-construct their arguments and explain them"

Nicola reflecting on the sessions.

Knowing why (values and meanings)

Their opinions and views were challenged, and they were asked to de-construct their arguments and explain them.

When Nicola showed pupil S the piece of work which would be exhibited at the Ashmolean he expressed a desire to produce something better, showing an element of pride and an awareness that he would be representing himself to other people.

"At first I didn't know how a big deal it was, but when you actually see your own artwork up there it does make you feel kind of special". (Meadowbrook pupil Liberty, reported in the Oxford Mail Dec 16th)

Their attitudes towards the museum itself was challenged. One student was very negative at the beginning of her visit to the Ashmolean, stating: 'I hate museums, I'm devastated we are here today.' She was engaged in the visit and by the end had a change of mind about the museum in general, saying it wasn't as bad as she thought and that she would come again.

"I didn't think I could just come in here, the building is so old. It's lush"

"I like the idea of having my work on display- nobody else can say they have had their work up in the Ashmolean"

"I love art, I've been here lots of times with my schools. I've never been here with my family though. I would really like to bring my mum"

Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

The sessions were integrated into the young peoples art sessions so they tried a number of different techniques, including collage, 3D canvases and making large scale 'repainted' responses using a projection of the original.

Staff reflected that work for their GCSE folders documented a real change in approach to learning and art, saying for example: *"Jasmine remembered everything we chatted about during the museum visit and has recorded in on the walls"*

Dionne fed back that there had been a real change in the student's approaches to art, and a technical improvement too.

"Meadowbrook students felt so much more confident about visiting the museum- one young person in particular (having never been to a museum before) went back a further 4 times independently to show family and friends her work and to tell them about the painting"

Dionne Freeman

2.2 Action/Experience: What learning occurred?

Budding Oxford Parents

Knowing what (facts and contexts)

The group visited the museum with their children, and later reviewed photos from the trip and spoke enthusiastically about the experience.

The mums all successfully achieved a Discover level Arts Award for their work, creating a portfolio and reflecting on what they had achieved.

They learned about the painting, and were able to explain who the sitter was and why they had chosen their jewellery designs for her.

Knowing why (values and meanings)

The mums were all very proud of their work. Some wanted to wear their pieces immediately, others saw their pieces as artworks to be framed. They were also proud that their work would be exhibited in the Ashmolean Museum.

"I loved the course I was sad when it finished". (Laura mum)

"It was amazing to see my work in the exhibition, I didn't think it would feel that good actually to see it up on the wall" (Young Mum Jess, reported in the Oxford Mail Dec 16th)

Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

The participants were helped and inspired to design and then make their own jewellery, they all achieved this, and created more than one piece each.

The sessions were very social, with the mums chatting about the task they were doing. They also discussed ideas for the next sessions, with Jess planning to make a choker to go with her earrings:

"it won't take you as long to make the choker because you know what you're doing now!" (Steph to Jess, both young mums)

The mums 'gelled' as a group, working together to help each other with their designs. They also used the time away from their children to discuss personal issues such as problems with housing or their relationships, and to offer each other support and advice.

2.2 Action/Experience: What learning occurred?

The Highfield Unit

Knowing what (facts and contexts)

Hands – on sessions such as exploring pigments allowed students to discover knowledge for themselves

“I really enjoyed learning about the way paint was made using just three ingredients and reflecting on how much this simple compound has evolved into an array of endless shades and colours”. (Pupil)

Additional activities in other subjects (creating the ‘Fanny rap’ and Fanny’s diary extracts in French) showed how the students had taken on and expanded on their knowledge of language and culture.

Knowing why (values and meanings)

Students asking to be given extra time to complete arts award folders demonstrated personal engagement in the project.

Students and their families attendance to the exhibition demonstrated a feeling of pride

Awareness of others – pupil B commented at the exhibition how pleased she was that her fellow students got involved.

Students spoke about their plans for the future such as using their arts awards in college applications

Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

The skills the group learned through the Digital Animation sessions were used in later sessions and in their own time.

The jewellery sessions became for many of them an opportunity to share a skill as part of their Arts Awards.

The students were able to recognise their existing skills such as making friendship bracelets.

The students were sometimes surprised by their skills and abilities:

“I’m surprised at how much art I have done. I’ve done more art in two weeks than I’ve done in all the years I’ve been at school. My portrait was what I had in mind from the beginning.”

The staff at Highfield learned a great deal about the arts awards and working with museums. This will enable them to be more confident when using the arts awards in the future.

2.2 Action/Experience: What learning occurred?

Young Dementia UK (YDUK)

Knowing what (facts and contexts)

The sessions focused on tapping in to the members knowledge of themselves, and drawing out enjoyment through new creative activities. Liz Greenlaw (One-to-one worker for Liz) said:

"We had a really good time. Liz's eyesight is poor and she wasn't sure if she would be able to enjoy the museum because of the dim lighting, but she loved the sculptures (and the lunch!) and was keen to return. Coming back the second time she said she now feels more confident about visiting other museums."

Colin Harrison's talk about the painting gave the group context without 'dumbing down' the content. They enjoyed the talk and the feeling that someone was giving them the time.

They enjoyed seeing new works of art and exploring the Ashmolean which was a new place for some.

One of the YDUK members commented how the music elements had helped her re-discover the pleasure of music.

Knowing why (values and meanings)

The clear focus of each session gave the group an end goal, and sense of achievement. Ian said of the collage activity - *"It's great to have an end goal....You don't know what it's going to look like when you're working on your part but then you see it when it all comes together."*

Some of the members have since spoken about going back to the museum themselves, including Bernie who hadn't been to the Ashmolean before but is now keen to go back again.

"I will feel more comfortable coming to the museum on my own, as I feel that the staff outside of this room too are helpful. I would love to be involved with another project some time." Jacqui

Overall the Museum's outreach team has discovered an unexpected outcome for community groups that support staff and group leaders are reigniting (or even starting) an interest and enjoyment of museums and art.

Knowing how (skills, how to take action)

The art sessions helped the group to rediscover old skills and interests, the collage activity for example was a new activity to many, but they were able to access old techniques of cutting and gluing.

Reciting the Owl and the Pussycat poem gave the group an instant sense of achievement.

"Jos felt like she returned to 'the old me' during sessions – How Lovely!" (Carer on behalf of Jos Morris)

"I would never normally sing, and my curiosity for playing instruments more has increased. I enjoyed the artwork side of the project too, I look forward to the exhibition" (Jacqui)

Many of the participants have said that they would like to do more art or craft based activity in the future.

This project has helped in building confidence for all parties, the YDUK members, staff and the Ashmolean staff all feel more prepared for future activity.

2.3 Progress: Sustaining learning for the future



Learning for the project teams and the Ashmolean is focused on capacity building, understanding more about the participants, their needs, and the Ashmolean's ability to cater for them. They tested new approaches and infrastructure such as centring multiple projects around a single painting, and producing exhibitions of participants' work. They also developed new partnerships and built existing ones.

Opening doors

For the participants, many of whom had not visited the Ashmolean or museums in general, the project encouraged them to visit and gave them a sense of belonging. Members of YDUK who had felt uncomfortable visiting new spaces discovered how much the museum had to offer and said they would like to visit again, citing the staff as an important factor. The Meadowbrook students felt more confident about visiting the museum and one young person who had never visited a museum before has already returned multiple times with members of her family. The BOP parents (above) enjoyed bringing their children and many participants from all five projects brought guests to the exhibition, demonstrating their pride in being involved.

Increasing capacity

Throughout the project, when people are asked to name key success factors they have all mentioned Nicola's sensitivity, enthusiasm and nurturing manner. More than a project manager, she has been fully immersed in forging good relationships and learning approaches.

A key aim for the project, however, was to increase the capacity of the museum to reach out to audiences of this nature, without relying on one part-time member of staff, and there have been other people involved along the way who have shown there is a great capacity for the museum to achieve this. Helen Ward and the Ashmolean Education team supported and worked with Nicola to ensure projects developed in line with the strategic direction of the Museum and Education team. This was particularly important as the timing of the project coincided with some significant changes for the Museum, which allowed the project to exploit the opportunities this opened up.

Non project specific staff involved included, amongst others:

- The front of house staff
- Colin Harrison's talk to YDUK
- Museum director Xa Sturgis's speech and his general support
- The artists contributing to sessions.

A longer term and wider reaching outcome for the project was to enable staff from both YDUK and the Ashmolean to feel more confident bringing challenging groups to the Ashmolean, and are more likely to continue without the need for Nicola's input.

2.3 Progress: Sustaining learning for the future and potential Impact

Catering for unpredictability, and sensitivity to complex needs

Due to the complex needs of all groups involved in the project there were many factors that could not be controlled by the project team, but the way the projects were delivered helped to make sure this did not impact on the outcomes.

For the Highfield project there were many sensitive needs to cater for, but instead of avoiding potential risks, they were managed. The jewellery sessions involved the use of sharp tools, which the students were allowed to use freely in the sessions, but were counted in and out each time. The students reactions were unpredictable but the Unit staff were always on hand to help, and their input at the beginning meant both institutions felt ownership of the project and all staff were able to be involved with the sessions in a hands-on, proactive way.

The Meadowbrook students had been excluded from mainstream education, and some were not particularly keen to visit the museum. They were invited in small groups, and a few cases one-on-one. Around half of them came on a visit which most of them enjoyed. One student in particular had been at first 'devastated' that she had to go, but by the end spoke about her positive experience during the visit.

Some of the YDUK members have since spoken about going back to the Museum themselves, including Bernie who hadn't been to the Ashmolean before but is now keen to go back again.

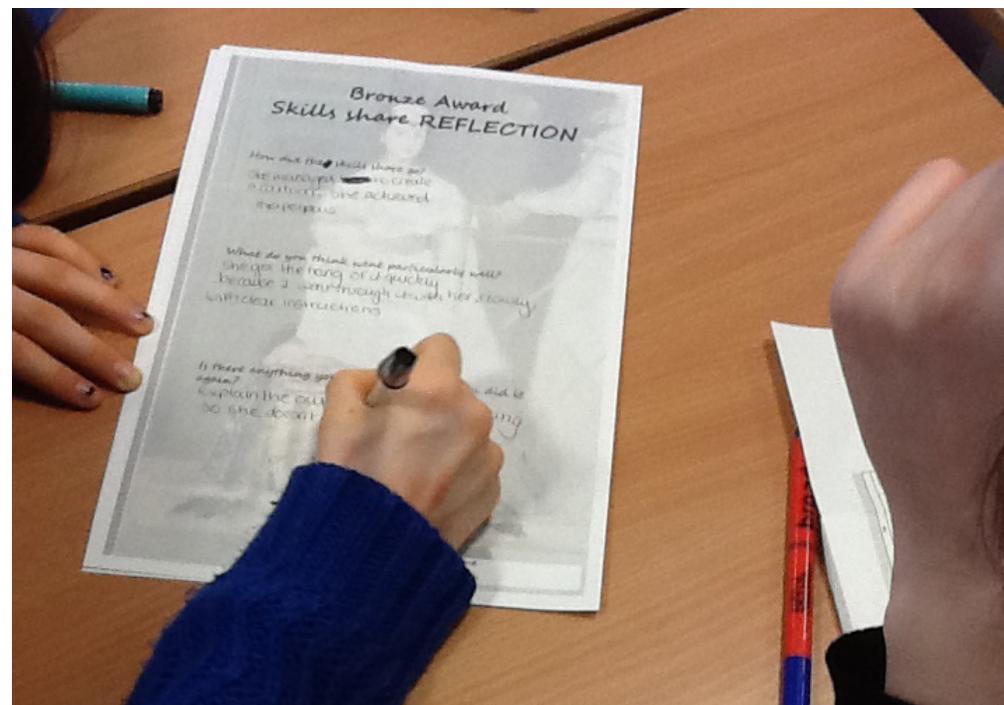
Achieving Arts Awards

The Arts Awards were a key factor for the Highfield Unit and the Young Parents, giving a focus, and celebrating achievement. The young people at Meadowbrook were also working towards achieving a qualification, either an Arts Award or an Art GCSE.

At Highfield, Tina was cautious about introducing an added pressure to vulnerable

young people - some of whom were in the Unit as a result of exam stress - and about working towards one end goal over a long period of time with a very transient group. She was encouraged by the success of a previous project with the Museum Outreach team, however, and was very careful to plan and communicate the project as a series of achievements, with a possible certificate at the end as an added bonus, which worked very well.

Using Arts Award as a focus for their work gave the Highfield students and the Young Mums a sense of purpose and achievement. They could see their folders building up week by week, and the time spent at the end completing their submissions created a meaningful end to the project (*see below image*).



2.3 Progress: Sustaining learning for the future and potential Impact

Using the blog

The blog was a really useful tool for all the projects, and was used in a number of ways:

- At the beginning of sessions at the Highfield Unit, to remind and reflect on what they had achieved, checking each week to see what has gone up.
- Allowing the participants to talk about the project in their own words, such as the post written by Pupil B at Highfield about her experience of creating the rap, and YDUK member Jacqui's blog about the YDUK project.
- Keeping a permanent record of the projects and the achievements of the groups. It generates a sense of pride, alongside the exhibitions and celebratory events. It also helps connect and contextualise all the projects together, creating a bigger sense of community.



I'll always think of Manet as 'Le Homme'

Posted on July 2, 2015 by nicolab



September 2015

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← Jul						

<http://www.ashmolean.org/ashwpress/manet/>

Benefits for facilitators and support staff

Overall the Museum's outreach team has discovered an unexpected outcome for community groups, which is that support staff and group leaders are reigniting (or even starting) an interest and enjoyment of museums and art. They also have greater capacity, having learned more about the ways of working. All enjoyed the experience greatly, and were inspired by the achievements of the participants.

- At Highfield, Tina's confidence using Arts Award improved and other staff were able to buy in to the process through a new shared understanding.
- Kate Coker who ran jewellery sessions for the Young Mums and Highfield had not worked with the Museum's outreach team before, and said that she had really enjoyed working with the groups involved.
- Dionne who works with the Hospital School and Meadowbrook on a regular basis was able to test new ideas and ways of working, and to give her students a valuable new experience.
- For YDUK one of the support staff fed back that the project, and especially the lunches together, also helped them. Both the people with dementia and their support workers can experience feelings of isolation, so this helped people at all levels come together and enjoy each others' company. They now have a new place to visit with members in the future.

Continuation

The project has acted as a starting point for many of the partners, instigating new relationships and ways of working. The Museum's family learning officers have started working with the Roundabout Centre where BOP are based, and Highfield is keen to explore new Arts Award projects. The partners have also continued to celebrate the achievements of the participants, for example the Hospital School has re-used the panels from the exhibition and have their own exhibition up in the café, which is the first time they have used their new exhibition space. VisionArtz at Meadowbrook also hosted their own exhibition of the project, enabling more young people and to staff find out about the painting and the museum.

2.3 Progress: Sustaining learning for the future and potential Impact

Wrap up: the Exhibition

There were two exhibitions of participants' work at the Ashmolean, one for the work produced during the light touch projects by the young mums, the Meadowbrook Unit and the Hospital School, and the other for the in-depth projects with Highfield and YDUK, (pictured below - from left to right: a quote from a YDUK participant, a crowd of participants, friends and family, Ashmolean director Xa Sturgis with Nicola welcoming the crowd, the exhibition open to the public). They provided a focus and an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the participants.

During the sessions with the Young Mums, Helen asked the group how their jewellery pieces should be displayed and they suggested that they should be framed, which was then carried through into the next exhibition and displaying the jewellery made at the Highfield Unit.

The Meadowbrook students were very motivated by the prospect of the exhibition, with one commenting that "nobody gets to say they've exhibited here".

For YDUK, the exhibition became an opportunity to invite family and friends to see what they had been doing, and to meet again as a group. The turn out and range of people that had been invited were good indicators of how proud the members felt of their achievements.

For the Highfield Unit, in particular for the staff, the exhibition may have had the biggest impact, as it became an opportunity to witness the real impact that the project had had on the young people. Six students who had been discharged came along with their families, and their attendance showed self motivation, and positive engagement with a period of their lives which otherwise could have been a painful memory.

Tina was really proud that they received their Arts Award certificates from the Museum director, and a highlight for her and the other tutors who attended was hearing from the young people that they were now feeling well, a stage in their recovery that they rarely get to witness.



3 Interim Recommendations

Building on the insights of the five community projects, below are some recommendations for the digital arts focus of the final stage.

Continue the successful nurturing approach

As noted above, the project has been successful due to Nicola's facilitation of relationships and a good sense of teamwork between Museum staff and external partners. Everyone is committed to ensuring that participants with complex needs are comfortable and inspired, and maintaining this will bring about more successful outcomes.

Digital project: An overarching idea adapted to different groups

The upcoming Digital project is likely to be structured as a single overarching idea (or type of practice) that different groups can participate in ways that suit their needs. This will be efficient and reduce planning time to an extent. However, the core idea will need to be designed well, to enable the flexibility for these different groups to feel both comfortable and challenged according to their needs.

Digital projects can sometimes risk being distracted by the technology itself, for example, if older people need extra instruction with digital devices or if young people want to use a wider range of applications to stretch themselves. However, the risk of this is likely to be lessened by the Ashmolean's experience in this area. In addition, because you have built up a solid bank of creative and dialogic tactics for exploring the Manet portrait, you will be better able to bring these to the fore. Technology can be seen as offering a set of creative and social tools to enhance this dialogue.

Build on strong relationships

It would be very valuable to see the Digital project as building on and celebrating the relationships and contributions of previous participants. This could include offering more sessions for people such as those from YDUK, who had bonded as a group through this activity. It would be interesting to explore ways that digital technology support engagement by people with dementia.

Explore ways to ease use of Arts Awards

Arts Awards are seen to be motivating and well-structured. However, they are time-intensive for staff and can be pressurised for some participants, particularly those at Highfield. If Highfield continues to be involved, it could help if staff are supported to have Arts Award training so that they could integrate gathering portfolio material into their own daily routines. This would free up Nicola and Museum Outreach colleagues to spend more time planning and delivering sessions. In addition, digital tools as part of the Digital Project could support participants to capture their work for their Arts Awards (submitting a digital work or portfolio, for example).

Increase support for sessions

There were times when Nicola noted being too busy with administrative or support tasks, to give as much creative and educational support as she would like. This could be eased with the additional support of a volunteer to help with tasks such as refreshments or documentation.

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