

Creative Connections

The use of visual language to provide positive moments of engagement

Judith Bower, Dementia Adviser from Alzheimer's Society Central Lancashire and Jane Souyave, Senior Lecturer and MA Graphic Design course leader at the University of Central Lancashire joined forces and combined their expertise to identify unique ways of using visual images to develop a beneficial activity for people with dementia.

INTERACTIVE WALL FRIEZE

The Alzheimer's Society's *Forget Me Not Living and Learning Centre* provides a safe and enjoyable area for people with dementia to spend quality time with their carers.

In searching for new activities that provide the visitors with positive experiences, Judith Bower and Jane Souyave conducted an initial study and developed this interactive wall frieze - 'fuzzy felt' fish aquarium. This developmental work generated an interactive experience for users to creatively explore tactile pieces of felt in producing a wall frieze.

It was proposed that this activity would generate a calming, interactive experience along with a creative outcome for users of the centre to view. After conducting a small scale study, the visitors offered positive comments supporting the project and expressed that they found the experience enjoyable, sociable and creative, whilst encouraging discussion and playful activity.



Interactive experiences involving community activities within Alzheimer's Society cafe and friendship group meetings.

Further work focussing on the qualities of touch and interaction in books was generated as a result of the above project.

The two books below were presented to the Lady Elsie Finney resource and activity library for public use within Alzheimer's Society in Preston.

A TOUCH OF SUMMER

This book was designed to stimulate the sense of touch through visually communicating in a simple manner. The large images and small amount of text enabled easy reading and understanding, whilst providing an opportunity for some quality time through engagement with the pages. The theme of summertime was chosen to uplift the users mood as it is reminiscent of happiness, carefree days and the pleasures that go with summer. Each page had a relevant printing process or technique that invited a reaction through the appeal of touch. The result was to stimulate senses leaving individuals with a lingering sense of summer and positive feelings.



The graphics depicted simple images related to summer using appropriate printing techniques and processes. Soft towelling fabric was used for the summer stripes of beach towels and cut out techniques enabled folding of flower petals and birds wings.

LUCKY NUMBERS

This book was aimed at a more masculine target audience. Each double page spread communicated one area of gambling through imagery with relevant graphic design techniques that encouraged touch and interaction. These various techniques and processes provided different experiences and the opportunity to exercise various actions in exploring the folds, pop-ups, cut outs, pull outs, turning, enveloping etc.. The variety of interactive qualities to explore served as a relaxing activity to evoke positive feelings.



ONGOING & FUTURE STUDIES

These findings went on to identify other potential projects for research within the area of sensory stimulation.

At present The School of Art, Design & Performance has established a new team to develop further research.

A 'Sensory Store' is being created to gather information on the interaction of various objects and 'things' that appeal to the senses.