Photographic Engagement with People with Dementia

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VUK

- VUK (School for adult education and communication)
  - Compensatory special education for adults
  - Lifelong learning

- People with early-stage dementia
  - Training and stimulation
  - Music and art therapy
  - Woodcraft

VUK, Aalborg Municipality, Denmark
Photography and Storytelling Project

- **Aim:** To explore the student’s experiences of being a student at VUK

- **10 students**
  - (5 M/5 F – Aged 67-83)

- **Given a camera with instructions**

- **Four weekly sessions**
  - (camera for 1 week prior)
Session Plans

- Group Poem
  - Being a student
  - Arriving at VUK
  - Other students
  - Teachers
  - Breaks and Activities

- Storyboard of a ‘typical’ day at VUK

- Home and family life

- Celebration and review
Taking & Talking about the Images

- Taking the photos
  - Support and help

- The sessions
  - Open questions
  - Focus on feelings rather than memory

- The student’s engagement
  - Recall of pictures
  - Sparked memories
  - Enhanced the discussion
  - The process was a ‘gift’

‘You can put a lot without using many words…’
Attending VUK – Structure of the day

- Cognitive training classes
- Music and art
- Woodwork
- Computing
- History
Attending VUK – How did they experience it

- Look forward to what the day brings
- Meeting new ‘challenges’
- Succeeding in tasks
- ‘Positive learning’
- Identity and contribution
- Friendships

‘It is about being together and new experiences. The unique thing is that you are fed with things that you have forgotten.’
Experience of Dementia

- Humour
- Openness
- Insight
- Isolation and frustration

“It can also be a challenge just to come here and get out of the door, the door step can get higher and higher to get over ... if you don’t get out much.”
Speaking Danglish!

- Speaking English/Danish/English/Danish...

- Cultural differences sparked conversations

- Value of non-verbal communication
A Danish Celebration!
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