



UCL Museums & Collections present:

Touch and the Value of Object Handling

Workshop 4:

***““Therapeutic approaches
to touch: Object handling
and hospital patients”***

Touch and the value of object handling

**An Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Networks Scheme organised
by UCL Museums & Collections**

During the winter of 2006 and the spring of 2007 UCL Museums & Collections organised a series of workshops investigating touch and value of object handling in museums. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the workshops brought together a diverse range of experts from academic and museum environments, with a view to establishing a network where information relating to the value of object handling can be shared and developed. Participants in the project came from a variety of backgrounds and brought with them a diverse range of expertise, research interests and museum access requirements. Scientists shared their knowledge of the underlying psychological and neurological mechanisms behind touch and sensation. Museum staff discussed the types of practical applications of touch employed in museum such as interactive displays, handling boxes and new technologies for interpreting objects. The union of these two groups afforded a unique opportunity to understand the true value of object handling and provide the museum world with a valuable toolkit for improving access and interpretation.

For further information about this initiative please contact:

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Workshop 4: Abstracts

“How can we measure the unmeasurable.?!”

Dr Caroline Selai,
Senior Lecturer in Clinical Neuroscience,
University College London,
Institute of Neurology

Aims of the two workshop sessions:

The two workshop sessions introduce participants to some of the conceptual and methodological issues surrounding the rigorous measurement of such nebulous outcomes as the “benefit” of an intervention e.g. handling museum objects, gazing at a work of art, participating in a therapeutic activity, etc.

The sessions will focus on some key practical issues of concern to those wishing to design a study to measure the “benefit” of activities they are currently carrying out with users/visitors/patients (depending on the local context) .

Learning outcomes:

At the end of this teaching session, participants should be able to:

- (1) Devise a strategy for coming up with an “operational definition” of the concept e.g. well-being, happiness, that you wish to measure;
- (2) List the main stages in the development of a measure or checklist including the various components of testing the new measure;
- (3) Understand (a) the complexities of writing clear, unambiguous questions, (b) the different types of response options typically used on questionnaires and (c) the reasons for preferring some questions and response formats over others;
- (4) Understand the main cognitive components of responding to survey questions. and related clinical issues e.g. cognitive impairment and the use of proxy data;
- (5) Understand some of the main things to consider when designing a study.

“Using Museum Loan Boxes in University College London Hospital”

Guy Noble, Arts Curator, University College London Hospital and **Dr Helen Chatterjee,** Deputy Director, UCL Museums & Collections

Enrichment activities in hospitals are increasingly being recognised for the potentially important role they can play in patient wellbeing and recovery time. Activities vary from massage and manicures through to pat dogs, reminiscence rooms, and art and music workshops to mention but a few. In this presentation we will discuss the origins of enrichment in hospitals and more specifically arts in health, the evidence for the impact of these activities on patients and we will outline an ongoing study at University College London Hospital using museum loan boxes.

In the first part of the presentation Guy Noble, Arts Curator at UCLH, will discuss his role

as Arts Curator at University College London NHS Trust and talk generally about Arts role in hospitals, its origins and the positive clinical, therapeutic outcomes on health of patients. He will also speak about the role that the Arts can play in medical education and staff outcomes.

In the second part of the presentation Helen Chatterjee, Deputy Director of UCL Museums & Collections and a lecturer in Biology, will describe new research investigating the potential value of museum loan boxes as an enrichment activity at UCLH. In particular this part of the talk will focus on the development of the research protocol, the logistics of setting up this programme of research and the practical process of implementing the research strategy.

“‘In another vein’ – The potential of touch and object handling for women facing a gynaecological cancer diagnosis.”

Dr Anne Lanceley,

Social and Behavioural Sciences Lead,

University College London,

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Institute for Women's Health

Throughout the process of diagnosis through to survival, people with cancer have to make a series of major transitions in their understanding of themselves, their illness and their world. These changes are emotionally and psychologically demanding and are processes that may start with the event of the diagnosis but which may not be completed until well after that event has passed.

The talk aims to explore the potential role of touch and object handling in facilitating therapeutically beneficial communications with women facing these major transitions. The talk will draw on preliminary experiences and learning from undertaking a pilot study that seeks:

- To measure the impact of object handling on emotional state, symptom distress and general well being
- To compare the therapeutic impact of object handling in patients undergoing major gynaecological cancer surgery with healthy controls attending an outpatients cancer screening clinic.

Description of our experiences of the pilot project will give a flavour of the practical issues and complex emotional processes at work when developing hospital based touch and object handling resources for people with cancer.

“Easing the Transition”

Claire Jacques,
Social Inclusion and Access Officer,
Lincolnshire Heritage Services

Following admission to the care home, professional carers can experience difficult communications between both the resident and family carer and themselves and the family. Appropriate use of the life history can offer a new perspective, enabling care staff to see the real person, transforming the communication process and translating task-oriented care into person-centred care.

Lincolnshire Heritage Services are currently working with Elderly People’s Services to explore the potential impact the use of museum objects can have in the process of producing life histories to improve person-centred care for residents entering long term care. Firstly this presentation will briefly discuss some of the therapeutic benefits of object based reminiscence work currently taking place in elderly care home settings. Secondly it will provide an insight into how a multi-disciplinary team of care workers and museum professionals are working together to develop ways in which they can facilitate the creation of visual, tactile and olfactory versions of residents’ life histories that can serve to further improve the relationship between the resident, professional carers and family carers.

“See, Touch and Enjoy”

Jackie O’Sullivan,
Nostalgia Room Project Manager,
Newham University Hospital NHS Trust

Some three years ago following another Musical afternoon on a care-of-the-elderly unit, it was realised how much patients wanted to reminisce and talk about their early years around the 40s and 50s, when most of them were still young and generally enjoying life.....



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