Seeing through another’s eyes. Service user art as a reflective tool in nurse education.

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A ‘How to...’ presentation and discussion

1. To explore the evidence base for the use of service user art in nurse education;

2. To discuss the implementation of this project and reflect on the student feedback;

3. To consider how a similar approach could be applied in attendees’ working context.
Hopes and (evidence based) aspirations

- Service user participation
  - Expected
  - Needed

- Transformative learning
  - Self examination
  - New insights
  - Attitudinal change

- Enhanced care delivery
  - Understanding
  - Compassion
  - Empathy
We have a sense of empathy with works of art. If we see gestures in a portrait, we actually ... simulate those gestures in our mind.
Kandel 2012
The study of art...can be a vital contribution to nurses’ different ways of knowing; experiences are no longer seen primarily through the collection of factual material. Brown et al. 2008
• 400 first year nursing students from three fields.

• *Understanding Mental Health and Wellbeing* module.

• Service user lectures.

• Tutorials
  - Blogs (EBL)
  - Art

• Feedback, feedback, feedback.
Feedback from tutorials

“Being alone in the water could again show that Jasmine feels quite isolated either within her family, socially or both.”

“To me this artwork shows someone seeking peace but struggling to find it because ... it [is] difficult to see past their problems/worries to what is good in their life - even though they know the good is there.”

“I feel as if the message for this week is that Jasmine ... feels as if she is alone and has no spark.”

“The sinking boat shows the way [that Philip] is feeling ... It expresses the way that he feels washed up and exhausted of energy.”

“The paint pallet could represent Mrs Spence’s moods with the colours almost all used up.”

“As the cage is empty it could represent a feeling that life is empty, or it could symbolise feelings of loss related to her husband.”
Evaluation of the module

“I enjoyed the use of the blogs and the art work. I also liked having the best speaker in at the end of the module to tell us about her art work and a bit about her story.”

“I liked the new style of tutorials, felt that having the blog and art work made us think about the 'family' as being real”

“The blog ... helped expand your imagination as to what really goes on in the real world, also the art work was very inspirational”

“I enjoyed the blog as it was a fun way of relating the lecture theory to tutorials. It also made you think of the lecture content in relation to patients.”

“the involvement of the artist and her talk were good as it helped relate topics to real life. Giving her real life experience as a recipient of care was fantastic and very motivating.”

“The blogs made the class more interesting and more interactive... It got discussions going to get more opinions about mental health.”
How could you use / improve this approach?


Kandel, E. (2012) *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present*. Deckle Edge


Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010). *Standards for Pre-registration Nurse Education*. United Kingdom: Nursing and Midwifery Council


For more about Lorraine’s work see https://mentalcapitalblog.wordpress.com/2015/08/24/remembering-lorraine-nicholson/