

Let's Not Sing Tipperary

Regular community singing for people with Dementia

Development of a Repertoire



An Evaluation of a singing group at The Healthy Living Club, Lambeth

Final Evaluation of a Singing Intervention
REPORT

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Introduction

This report documents the activity interim and final findings of a singing group of older people, most living with dementia, some of their carers and support volunteers. It is funded by The Mrs Smith and Mount Trust and is run at the Lambeth Healthy Living Club, Lambeth and placed within a set of other creative and daily activities. The project was split into two phases; first 6- months and last 6- months. The interim report at the end of the first phase made suggestions for the final phase. This included repeating songs every week, or wherever possible to try and collect an average and to compare trajectory of impact over time. This document reports the findings from 12 months of the project from September 2015- October 2017. It was designed and led by Melanie Jones current Musician in Residence, Supported by music practitioners Rosemary Publicover and Dave Bll, the club Manager Simona Florio and the team of volunteers, particularly Carlo Bellanova who collected the raw data for the final 6-months.

The benefits of singing and wellbeing for those with Dementia are widely reported, in particular through extensive research carried out by the Sydney De Hann Centre, Kent, (e.g. Clift, S.M., Hancox, G. 2001). This project is providing information to support the development of a model, exploring suitability of repertoire and the value of (and how to introduce) teaching new material, helping people to structure singing activities to maximise the wellbeing and health benefits rather than the impact it has on wellbeing.

The external evaluation involved preparing a mixed method based on observation process and advising the Club (including training the volunteers who would be taking part in observation note- taking at sessions), making a number of visits to the Club while the singing project was under way to observe and to talk to participants and their carers, and to report to the Musician in Residence on findings, submitting an interim report at the end of March 2016 and a final report in 2017.

The evaluation role specifically was to

- Examine what is the experience of the singing activity and how does the activity and space enhance a sense of flourishing and wellbeing for participants and staff: what are the key elements that can be distilled and presented as a model
- Examine which aspects and songs of a repertoire work better than others in terms of; 1) engagement 2) understanding 3) Social Interaction 4) Vocal development 5) Mood (positive and negative affect)
- Try to examine the experience of up to two people in terms of engagement and mood benefits
- Present a potential framework based on the examination
- Actions for programme delivery and recommendation for practical steps that could be implemented that could inform the application of the model

This project responds to the growing number of people living with Dementia, and enabling them to live better with the disease.

'Lets Not Sing Tipperary' is developing and modelling a repertoire to make accessible resources for a web site that has been in operation for 3- months. The site went live on the 8th September 2016 currently has had just under 7,000 unique visitors over 4.5 months)

www.letsnotsingtipperary.co.uk

Summary

Key Findings

Data Outcomes and Discussion

Overall the data shows an upward trajectory in all areas over time, although there is marked increase in understanding and engagement over all areas examined. Least impacted was social interaction, which suggests that individuals are focused and concentrated on singing and engagement, rather than interacting. Very little negative affect was recorded in phase 1, so this was not assessed in phase 2.

Physical warm- ups

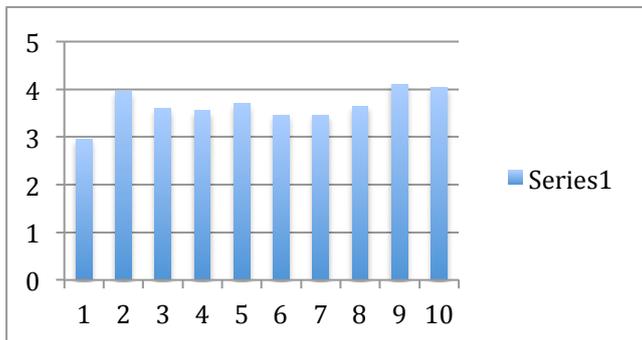
Phase 1- First Six- months

The data shows a general upwards trajectory of understanding, social interaction and positive mood, with a peak at around time 3 (NB there is no consistency in time measurements, some warm ups are repeated weekly, others are not). Adding penguins and Shoulder rolls increases engagement, understanding, and reduces social interaction and positive mood.

Phase 2- Last 6- months

Generally there is an upward trajectory of averaged scores over 10 consecutive weeks doing 'Rub Hands, Yawn & Stretch'. This suggests individuals are learning and retaining the exercises, improving weekly.

It would be fair to suggest that this set of warm- ups works well for this group.



Total average scores of Rub Hands, Yawn & Stretch' over x 10 weeks

Vocal Warm- ups

Phase 1- First Six- months

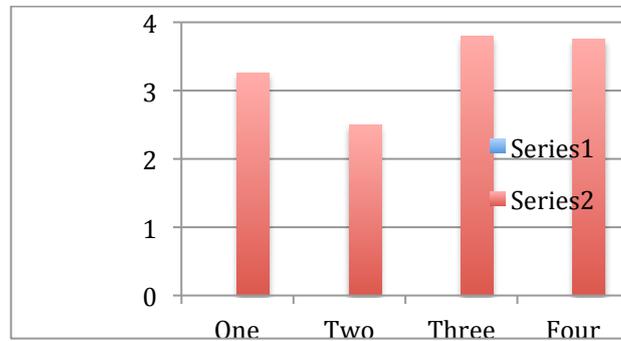
There appears to be an increase in scores over time during vocal worm ups comprising of breath and sustain chord, 5 note scale and Bella Sinora. However, there is a high negative mood score. The addition of Yodel appears to increase scores overall.

Phase 2- Last 6- months

There is a distinct difference between four sets of songs. Each set is run consequentially and total averaged scores increase over time. Adding Mesa Di Voci appears to increase scores overall the most, so it would be fair to suggest that this set works well with Bella Signora a close second.

Given that Bella Signora performed well in phase 1 this and Mesa di Voci could be the most impactful for use in the model.

- One Breath & Sustain
Cats and Mosquito Owl
Yodel
- Two Breathe & Sustain
Cal and Response Do Do
Cres Dim
- Three Breathe & Sustain
Call and Response Do Do
Bella Signora
- Four Breathe & Sustain
Call and Response Do Do
Mesa di Voci



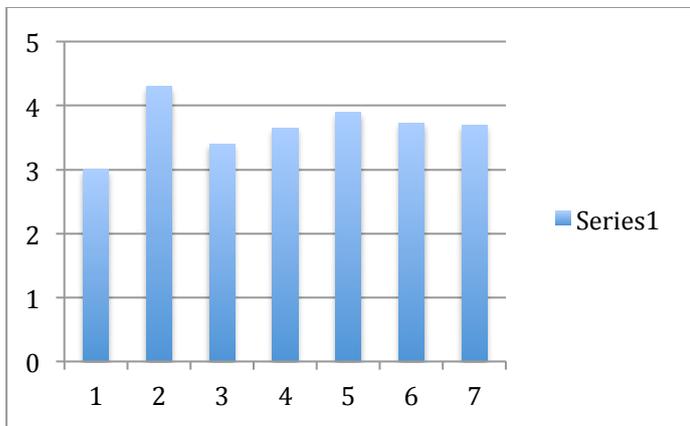
Mental Warm ups

Phase 1- First Six- months

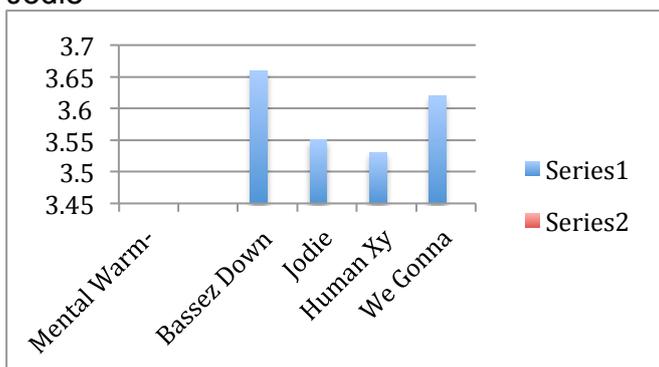
Second week of Knees up Mother brown sees an increase in all scores. Noticeably, there is a negative mood here, not seen in many other exercises. Second and third weeks of Bassez down sees increase in scores especially understanding, but there is a reduction of positive mood in week three. There doesn't appear to be much significant difference between these two warm ups other than Knees up Mother Brown appears to score slightly higher in positive mood than Bassez Down.

Phase 2- Last 6- months

Generally there is an upward trajectory of averaged scores in Bassez Down, which is sung consecutively over 7 weeks



There was insufficient data to analysis other songs individually, but a group analysis showed that Bassez down had the highest scores, followed by We Gonna, Human Xylophone and Jodie

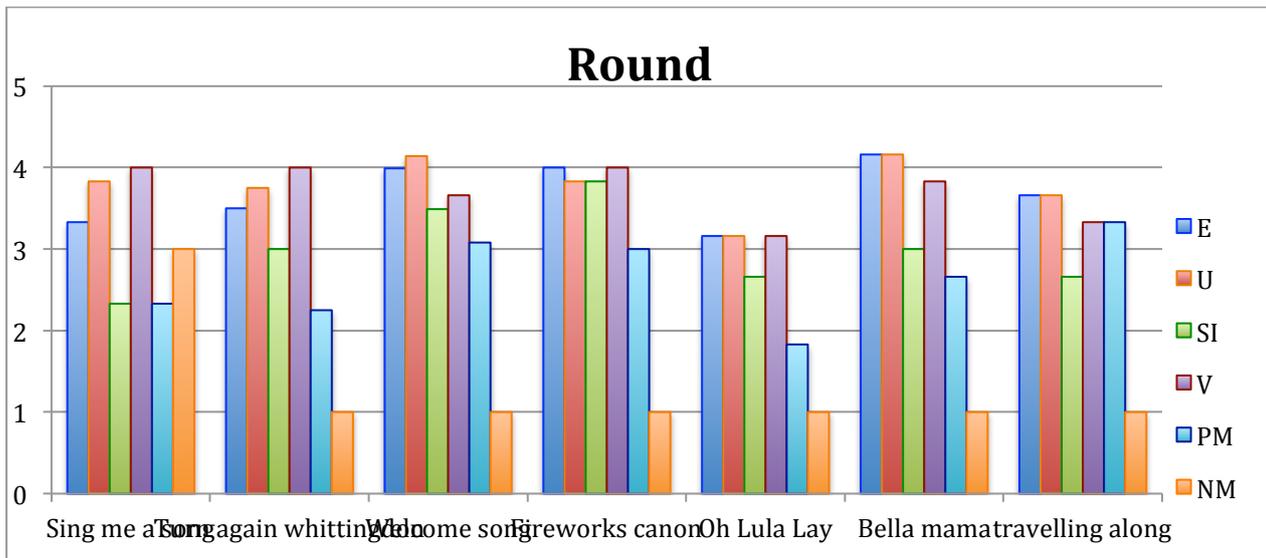


In summary, Bassez Down and Knees Up Mother Brown appear to be the highest scoring mental warm ups in phase 1 and 2 and would be useful for the model.

Round

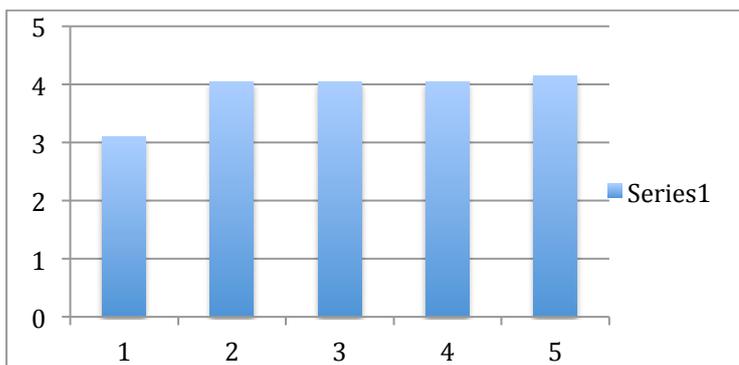
Phase 1- First Six- months

Welcome Song, Fireworks Canon and Bella Mama clearly positively affect the variables (Engagement, Understanding, Social Interaction, Vocal expression, Positive Mood, negative Mood) more than the other songs and we can be confident that this affect is probably shared across the whole group. Oh Lula Lay scores lowest and this effect is also shared across the whole group, suggesting that we can be fairly confident that this is the least popular or engaging song of the repertoire that we tested.



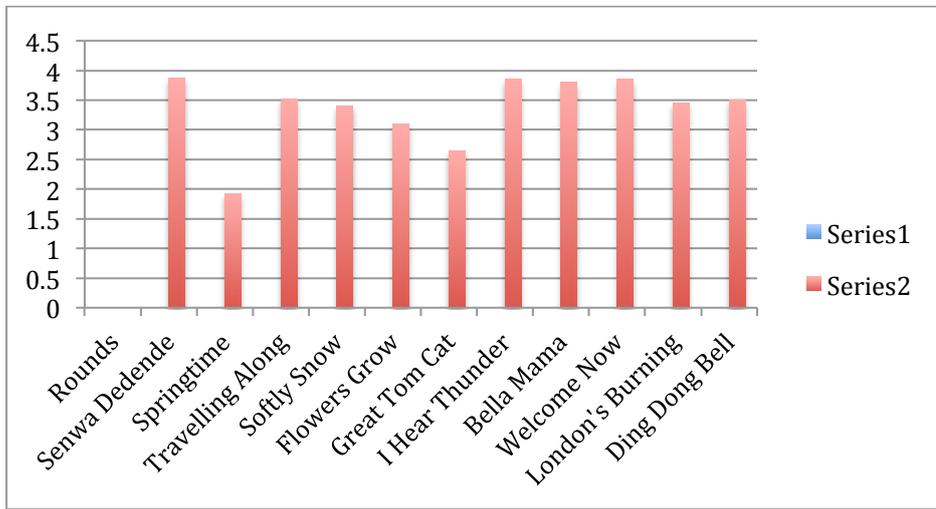
Phase 2- Last 6- months

A definite upward trajectory of Senwa Dedende, suggesting individuals were learning, engaging and enjoying the song over time.



There was insufficient data to analysis other songs individually over time, but a group analysis showed that Senwa Dedende and Welcome Now had the highest scores suggesting these were the songs benefiting engagement and understanding overall.

Over the two phases Welcome now scored highest, with Bella Mama next. Travelling along also featured well in both phases. Using these songs and Bassez Down in Rounds would be beneficial and the data suggests individuals can learn them over time. These songs are the most robust with a similar outcome likely in other settings.



Life Repertoire 1

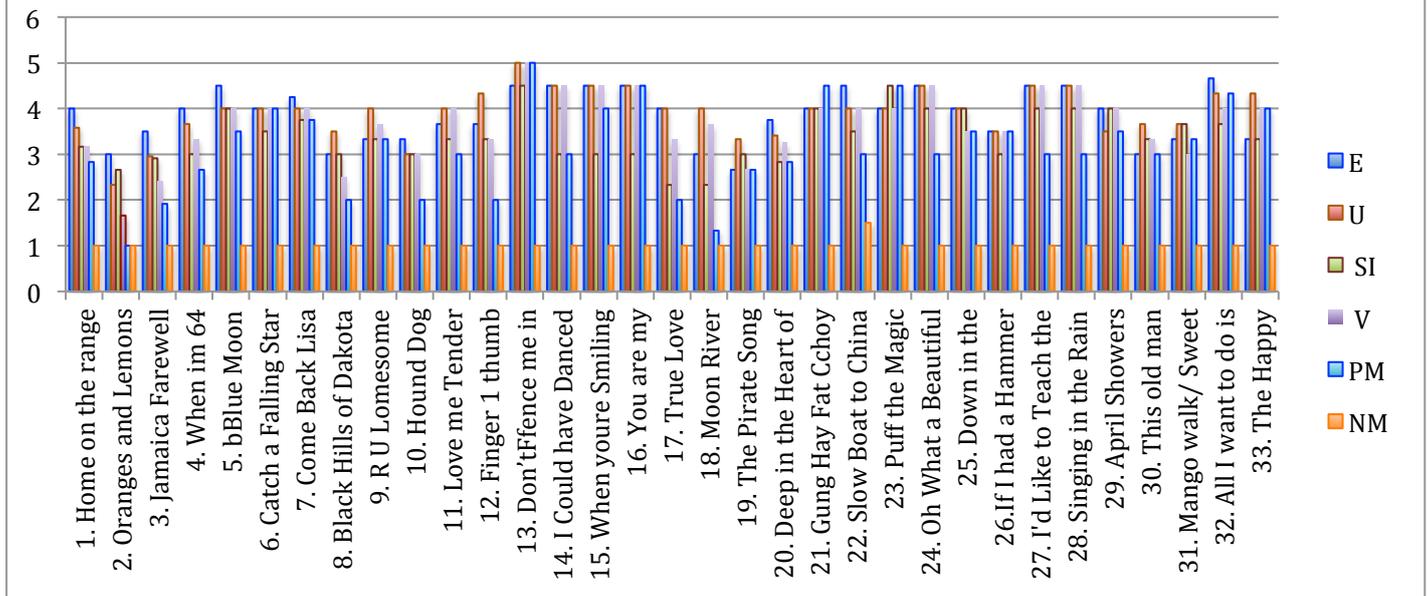
Phase 1- First Six- months

Don't Fence Me In scores highest so we can be fairly confident that everyone was engaged in this song more than the other songs. You're Smiling and You are my Sunshine also have higher scores. This is similar to Singing in the Rain, I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing and Oh What a Beautiful Morning. Oranges and Lemons, Puff the Magic Dragon and the Mango Song may include a participant who may have been unengaged, or only a small number of participants were extremely engaged, so we can't be confident that this is a true score of the whole group.

Generally scores in Home on the Range, Come Back Liza and Deep in the Heart of Texas improve the second time around and we can be fairly confident that this score reflects the whole group and there are no participants engaging more or less than others. Although Jamaica Farewell improves the second time round, we cannot be sure that the whole group engaged well with this. There may have been participants of Jamaican decent that were very engaged and others who were not.

We also compared sets of themed songs to see if there were any differences. Love me Tender, in a 'Rock and Roll; theme, scores highest implying that everyone engaged with this song more than the other 2 Rock and Roll songs. Of the two Chinese songs, Gung Hoy Fat Choy was engaged with better and also marginally shows an improvement in scores over 2 time frames.

Life Repetoire 1



Life Repertoire 2

Auld Lang's Ayne and You Are My Sunshine scores are high. On the Street where you Live shows a distinctly high SI score. Red Red Robin has the highest engagement score with When the Saints and Bye Bye Blackbird. Have I Told you Lately I Love You and Magic Moments, Fly Me to The Moon and Chattanooga Cho Cho score lowest. However there may have been participants either engaging very much more or very much less than others in these latter songs.

Lambeth Walk Scores imply that everyone engaged well with this. Gilly Gilly scores suggest a not especially well engaged with song by the whole group.

Phase 2- Last 6- months

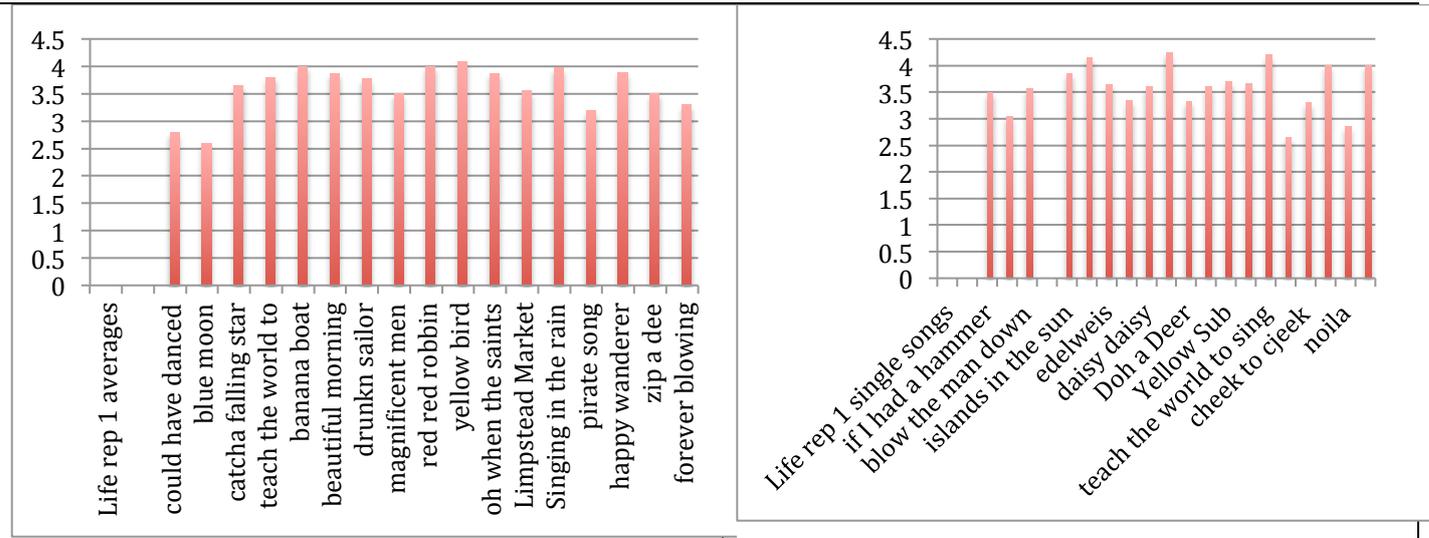
Generally on average in most songs there is an improvement in scores second and third time round. Top scoring songs are Yellow Bird and Singing in the Rain, of those songs sung frequently and a Nightingale Sung in Barclay Square, I'd like to teach the World to Sing and Red Sails in the Sunset, of those only sung once. Singing in the Rain, I'd Like to teach the World to Sing and Oh What a Beautiful Morning also features as high scorers in phase 1. So we can assume that these songs are robust with a similar outcome likely in other settings.

On average understanding scores the highest, engagement second and vocal development/ positive mood following. Songs in which the reverse i.e. scores dip second or third time round are: Oh What a Beautiful Morning, Yellow Bird, Pirate Song, Deep in the Heart, Zip a Dee Doo Dah and I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles. Oh When the Saints shows an up and down trajectory although on average scoring the highest in understanding. Generally social interaction is the lowest score and there are no scores of negative mood. Social interaction supersedes vocal or positive mood in the following songs:

Blue Moon, If I had a Hammer, I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing, Drunken Sailor, Those Magnificent men.

This suggests that individuals are learning songs, remembering them weekly and enjoying them generally. Where there is little social interaction, there could be an assumption that individuals are focused and concentrating on the songs, and the act of singing is an individual one, with little need to socially interact. Where there is social interaction, it could be that the

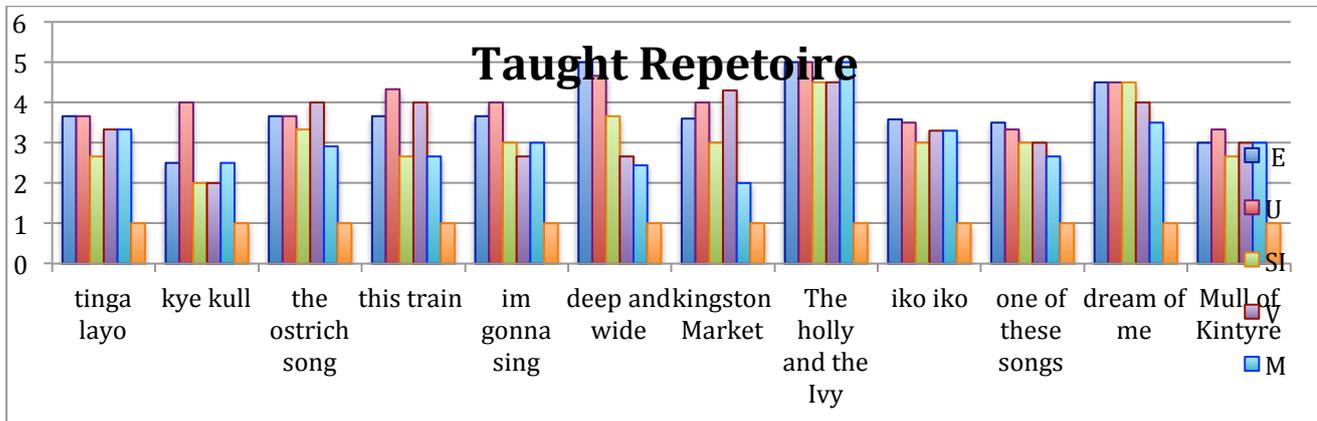
songs are funny and lively, thereby the desire to share humour with each other, or when sharing of song sheets occurs.



Taught Repertoire

Phase 1- first 6- moths

The Holly and the Ivy appears to stand out as the song most engaged (although this might be a pleasant association with Christmas), followed by Dream of Me, Deep and Wide and Kingston Market. Iko Iko, One of These Songs, Mull of Kintyre and Kye Kuli Khe score lowest overall. There were no participants engaging (or not) a lot more than others, other than Mull of Kintyre. However for this part of the repertoire, Kye Kuli Khe was universally a least engaged with song.



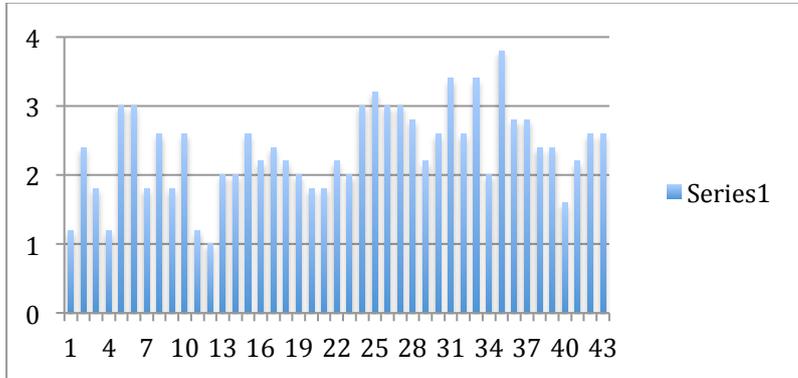
Phase 2- Last 6- months

Generally here overall scores show irregular up and down trajectory. Understanding and engagement still highest scores, although here, social interaction often higher than vocal or positive mood, especially when singing The Lion Sleeps Tonight, Tinga Layo, Ostrich Song, and Pirate Song (perhaps because there are more actions and humour in these). The Lion sleeps tonight and Ostrich Song, both showed downwards trajectory second time round. Scores drop the second time around or third time round for One of These Things, Iko Iko and The Ostrich Song.

Overall, top scoring songs are Tinga Layo, Sing Me A Song and Lion Sleeps Tonight. These scores have increased from phase 1 suggesting these songs may have been learned and remembered more than the others.

Individual Scores

One individual's scores were examined weekly to look at whether there was change over time. During Life Rep 1, scores generally showed an upward trajectory over time. This suggests that the individual was learning, engaging and enjoying the repertoire consistently over time.



Life Rep Scores

Taught Rep is similar to the overall pattern, up and down, but with a slightly more downward trajectory overall. Highest score here was in Lion Sleeps Tonight. This correlates with the group score, suggesting Lion Sleep Tonight was learnt, remembered and enjoyed most over time.

The Role of The Facilitators

How does the presence of a good facilitator effect the development of the project?

A good facilitator is able to bring the group together and increase feelings of camaraderie through eliciting positive emotions and having a great sense of humour with fun being a key ingredient. This report highlights the positive influence the facilitators have on the group especially:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Creating a safe place
- Provide different levels of engagement
- Provide moments of laughter and humour
- Making people feel valued
- Explaining well and appropriately
- Patience
- Connecting with individuals
- Working with participants own pace

Creating a Positive Experience

- Generally the project is set within a place which prides itself on its family values and including everyone
- The space is set up so people are genuinely welcomed and able to chose where they want to be
- Volunteers are valued and included in the group to support participants to engage
- Participants are individually welcomed by name and eye contact to ensure a connection is made so people have a sense of belonging
- Learning is in a relaxed place and pace
- A selection of different meaningful repertoires and diversity of song keeps things energized
- It is pleasurable for people who express enjoyment through smiles and laughter

Session Delivery

- Well planned sessions with repetition and rhythm important for learning
- Providing a framework that promotes safety, and security.
- Patient explanation weekly, to ensure people feel comfortable with what they are doing
- Simple and straightforward songs seem easiest to learn

Appendix

Background

The Healthy Living Club provides people with dementia, their carers and the residents of Lingham Court (an extra care unit in Stockwell) with an opportunity to be with each other and enjoy themselves together. They run a Wednesday Club (11.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.) and a Monday morning Breakfast Club (10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.).

They describe their meetings "like parties: there always is music, good food and much laughter". Activities are chosen to meet the specific needs of people with dementia, but everybody else —carers, volunteers and visitors— take part in them and enjoy them as well.

This project sits within 80 hours of music-based activities (25 of which were “singing for the brain” sessions) designed to accommodate the wide-ranging interests of members (e.g. yodelling, Caribbean music, song-writing, rapping, the soundtracks of Disney films, tap dancing).

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation is a mixed-methods design. The qualitative design comprised an initial participatory action research methodology to try and understand the qualitative experience of the programme; what works best and what can be extracted as positive experiences to create a framework, before the main investigation began. The researcher then created an observational framework based on DCM™, Nolan’s 6 senses framework and positive experiences defined by Positive Psychology

For the quantitative design, we try to provide statistical evidence of the effect of different parts of the repertoire on the independent variables. There are 6 independent variables: Engagement, Understanding, Social Interaction, Vocal Expression, Positive Mood and Negative Mood, with 5 different levels (1-5, with 5 being the most engaged and 1 the least). These variables were thought important to the team and could meet the intended outcomes of the funding application. The dependent variables were a number of sections (Physical Warm Ups, Vocal Warm Ups, Mental Warm Ups, Rounds, Life Repertoire 1, Taught Repertoire, Life Repertoire 2 and Cool Down) with either 1,2,3 songs in each section.

An observational quantitative framework was developed, to record different levels of interaction on the 6 (variables) areas. The observations and collection of data was informed by DCM™ as standard questionnaires would not be possible to use with this group who might find it difficult to self-report. Additionally, comment boxes were left for salient observations, and a space at the end to record overall impressions of the session and anything that might have affected interaction, such as the weather, bereavement, musical instruments, missing people etc. Volunteer staff and the singing facilitators were trained to record the levels of interaction of 5 people and the group as a whole (we will call them mappers for this report). Of the 5 participants to be observed, 3 were randomly selected and 2 were those that the facilitators felt would be useful case studies to observe.

Procedure

For the quantitative evaluation, the volunteer mappers joined the singing group at the start, and sat just outside the circle, in a position that enabled them to see the participants allotted to them. They recorded each person’s experience of each part of the repertoire, giving an overall

score (1-5) for each. This procedure was carried out until the session ended and followed weekly at every session. The sheets were given to the evaluator.

For the qualitative outcomes observations were made of the activity every 2 months, analyzing the activity, interactions and the space against the framework. A number of semi- structured interviews were carried out with volunteers and the music facilitators to gain an understanding of their observations and test the observations. Those reported by the researcher and comments observed by those recording the tabled observations, were explored and placed into themed areas, built on the research that had been used to build the initial project and funding application. (Clift, S.M., Hancox, G. 2001).

The quantitative data was inputted into an excel spreadsheet and a means test was performed for the 6 interaction categories, with standard deviation for each set. Tables were created to visually compare the different aspects of the repertoire.

The research project began when the singing activity had already started. This defined the design of the research; a base line couldn't be measured. It was decided therefore, that the project would not investigate what impact the project had on participants, but rather the way and intensity that different aspects of the repertoire would be interacted with and the experience of the activity.

Participants were fully briefed on the project and assured confidentiality.

Wellbeing

For the purposes of this project it was important to understand which wellbeing paradigm was going to frame the evaluation. There is an increasing acknowledgment that a range of interconnecting factors influences people's health and wellbeing. The WHO ¹ states "health as being a complete state of mental, physical, social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO 1946).

Wellbeing is a broad and complex concept including happiness, satisfaction with life, autonomy and sense of purpose.

"To feel positive about the present, feeling hopeful about the future; feeling confident about being able to handle life's stresses and problems (resilience); and feeling that mostly life is fulfilling and rewarding". ²

The research and recommendations was underpinned by this definition, the following and the Care Act (2015) principles:

We draw on the models of person- centered care developed by Kitwood. T, (2005), the measures for behaviors presented by Dementia Care Mapping™ and relationship- centered theories (Nolan et al, 2006) which underpin the research this report is based on. This combined position has been taken by a number of authors (Huppert, 2009, Keyes 2002b; Marks & Shah, 2005; Seligman, 2002, 2011)". (Huppert & Cooper Eds. In press)³, (Ryan and Deci, 2013).

The new statutory principle of individual wellbeing underpins the Care Act that came into effect in 2015, and includes the physical, mental and emotional of both the person needing care and

¹ World Health Organization

² Lambeth First (2009), Wellbeing and Happiness Programme: The Lambeth mental wellbeing programme 2009-2012

³ New Economic Foundation.

³ Huppert, F.A., Cooper, C.L. (in Press) (Eds) Interventions and Policies to Enhance Well-being. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.

their carer. Broadly, this supports the need to help people achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life. The Care act defines it relating to the following areas:

- Personal dignity
- Physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Control over everyday life
- Participation in work, education, training or recreation
- Social and economic wellbeing
- Domestic, family and personal relationships
- Suitability of living accommodation
- Contribution to society
-

About the Researcher

Belinda Sosinowicz is an arts consultant with extensive experience of developing interventions and programmes that benefit wellbeing and designing and managing research projects. She has both arts and positive psychology post graduate qualifications, which enables her to understand both fields of art and science. She is trained as a Dementia Care Mapper and Mental Wellbeing Health Impact Assessment consultant, which she draws on to develop evaluation. Her research management has included a £630,000 Guy's and St Thomas Charity funded arts and dementia research project for Age Exchange. www.tapartsproject.co.uk

The Delivery Team

Three music facilitators, one who has had specific training in community choirs, one with 'Singing for the Brain' training and another accomplished musician, who plays the piano, facilitate the evaluation. A team of volunteers, who sit and support participants, many of who have dementia and their carers, supports it.

Situational Analysis

Current Working Practice

On average 30-40 people over the age of 65, most with dementia and some of their carers attend the Healthy Living Club, Lambeth on Wednesday from 11- 3pm, of these approximately 95% attend the singing group.

The singing group runs for 45 minutes from 12:15- 1pm every Wednesday.

The Role of the Facilitators- Details

We have identified a number of factors that contribute to a sense of enjoyment and engagement at the sessions and offer 'highlight's' that could be used to frame the model that will be added to for the final report.

How does the presence of a good facilitator effect the development of the project?

A good facilitator is able to bring the group together and increase feelings of camaraderie through eliciting positive emotions and having a great sense of humour and fun is key.

LNST facilitators have excellent interpersonal skills, and are in control of the session, yet allow singers to choose their own level of involvement which helps build autonomy in participants. The facilitators display a range of strengths to draw on and appear knowledgeable about singing and music, though humble in their demonstration. Making mistakes can add to the

experience of breaking barriers and group cohesion.

Participants recognise the facilitators (although may not be able to recall their names). They are comfortable with them as shown by the natural banter there is between participants and facilitators. This feeling of safety that facilitators create forms a trusting environment where people feel able to open up, sing, move and perform. This is consistent with the category of 'Openness' that is thought to be a factor consistent to a 'Positive Experience'.

Facilitators don't assume the group understand each part of the repertoire, and provide different levels of engagement and support so that there is something for everyone.

Laughter and Positive Emotions is important, facilitators are able to laugh at themselves when they make a mistake and take delight in the participant's skills and achievements. They are also able to smile in acknowledgement when encouraging participants.

Highlights

Laughter and smiles are important when running a session
Using names at the start of the session and throughout increases the sense of feeling valued
Facilitators use their hands to indicate pitch and note, pointing high for higher notes, low for lower notes
Should not embarrass or make members feel embarrassed about their performance, participants must feel valued and not feel mocked.
Patience shown in explaining and guiding like through the repertoire weekly
Use eye- contact and gentle validating touches to enforce this throughout the session
Get to know each person's preferences so are able to enhance feelings of personal identity, in particular respecting each person's interests
Judge optimal functioning, when to increase or decrease repertoire challenge. Work with participants own pace

Creating a Positive Experience/ Positive Place

Creating a shared sense of values

The club coordinator is from Mediterranean extraction, and has imbibed the club with Mediterranean community values she says, "I want to replicate my village square atmosphere". Her approach and values cascade throughout the centre; volunteers and facilitators internalize this approach. This includes an empathetic attitude that is able to assess

level of comfort required by people for example hugging, kissing, holding, touch (validation 'Mothers touch' was noted) or sitting next to people- what ever they require, to ensure they feel that they belong.

A number of key factors were picked out as helping create the 'right' space to enable a 'pleasant' experience that enhances group cohesion, provides a relaxing space in which to be open and enables participants to feel secure enough to participate.

A Welcoming and Supportive Space

The space is set up in a circle, people are welcomed genuinely and they are gently supported in a friendly way and invited to sit in the place they chose. Volunteer's guide people to their seats and may sit next to those who may need support to participate; holding song sheets, singing themselves, smiling encouragingly with participants. This encourages the situation of singing as normative behavior that others feel comfortable they can emulate.

The session begins with a naming song by which each person is acknowledged and welcomed into the circle.

When a session goes well, facilitators report they feel energized, motivated and feel that a job has been well done.

A sense of Belonging

Developing 'connections': belonging seems to be the most important factor, and the importance that people should feel this.

Pace and meaningful activity

Learning in a relaxed, social space relaxes and connects people, provides the comfort and safety that is a requirement to learn.

The facilitator/s kept the momentum going with a range of different songs and sometimes percussion objects that kept the pace active and engaging. There was enough variation-diversity of themes chosen to keep interest, assist concentration and absorption and enable in depth focus and flow. Some of the songs chosen were profoundly rich and culturally meaningful to some participants.

Pleasurable

People experienced pleasure during a session as observed through little recorded episodes of negative affect. The focus on the positive emotions might offset a depressive downward cycle of negative affect (Fredrickson 2001) that people might experience with Dementia.

People openly express enjoyment by smiling, laughter and through their body language, when attending and comments afterwards. Often the feelings of pleasure and achievement stay with people for the afternoon). Being with peers whilst achieving seems may help build confidence.

A Positive Place

Generally the environment is supportive and welcoming. The researcher observed many incidences of person- centered (as defined by DCM) interactions between volunteer staff, activity facilitators and personal enhancement.

The main coordinator can be observed making judgments on levels of comfort required by different people; for some a smile, others a touch, others a hug and a kiss. When interviewed she said she modeled the environment on a village square in her native Mediterranean home.

Highlights

Maintain the same structure for regular sessions
Give opportunities for singers to choose whether to engage or not
Include opportunities for laughter
Increase the positive emotions in the group; including opportunities for humour and laughter (but not at the expense of members)
Shape activities so that <i>flow</i> can be achieved. Matching the right (Singing) skills with the right challenges, and increasing the challenge each time the skill set is achieved.
Ensure that the pace of the activity meets everyone's pace and doesn't go too fast, or too slow
Ensure that skills should match the challenge- but the challenge should be incrementally increased so that singers don't get bored and let their minds wander.
Warm up activities at the start, focus on breathing and exercise. The group can be brought back to the task in hand during the session, through breathing, being mindful of the breath, being aware of the diaphragm- which muscles etc.
Demonstrate genuine, care and affection for participants that provide safety, security and comfort.
Provide a relaxed place and work to people's strengths
Use a range of different songs, ranging from sad to happy, culturally and thematically diverse.
Keep the pace active and lively; yet explore some songs in depth. The range of songs should be evocative as well as light-hearted.
Create an atmosphere of joy and interest. Warm up activities are fun and silly to encourage laughter.
Give the right support to achieve good musical standard and to improve to a point where good performance is possible
The challenge should not be perceived out of the reach of singers. It is important that self-esteem is not shaken by being criticized or teased - the facilitator must be aware of who can be teased.
Awareness of the singing apparatus is vitally important. Tension and nervousness kill pleasure so make sure participants warm up well

Informally teach learned optimistic strategies such as appreciating the moment, overcoming adversity, achievement, seeing learning new songs as positive challenges.

The diversion from the stresses of worries can be achieved during a focused singing session. The distraction method can help stop 'the loop in your head'. Singing could be seen as useful technique to help adults change their explanatory style from pessimistic to optimistic.

Ensure the experience is always positive, with emphasis on positive emotions

Ensure singers experience positive emotions frequently.

Ensure new goals are achievable to increase confidence. Hitting some high notes and associated breathing problems could be a challenge for some, but the feelings of achievement outweighs the negative affect.

Reward (verbally) the effort put in as well as the final result

Keep to the pace that participants are comfortable with, when bringing new repertoire in.

Session Delivery

Repertoire Structure

Well-planned sessions where there is Repetition and Rhythm following the same structure, over time are important for learning.

At the LNST project the structure is remembered in some way and is important to the development of the group's vocal ability. The structured approach seems to embed in people's memory. They may not be able to remember the facilitator's name, but they have a memory of aspects of the repertoire. This is confirmed by the regular name introduction at the start, 'Bassez Down' which was new to start with, but now each member is able to join in with gusto. Repetition is an evidenced way to build learning, particularly in children, as it helps build new neurological pathways. Is possible that this is also occurring within this group of people, but there is no actual evidence to support this other than some people are able to learn new songs over time.

Comfort and Understanding

This relates directly to the DCM™ Personal Enhancer of Comfort, in particular providing a framework that promotes safety, and security.

Facilitators don't assume that the group understands each part of the repertoire (participants need reminding and guiding weekly due to memory problems inherent with dementia, so for some it may feel like a new experience weekly). They patiently explain it as though participants have come to it as new. This makes people feel comfort not failure protecting them from a potential anxiety that they may have forgotten something. Rounds are easier to get hold of.

Highlights

Adequate preparation time built- in for facilitators to reflect on previous sessions and hose repertoire accordingly

Clear boundaries 1-hour sessions with structured regular repertoire items

Access to song sheet copies for everyone when studying a new song; aids learning

Facilitators should arrive early enough to help set out the room and have time preparing.

A warm welcome. Individual rapport, use of names, eye contact, to reduce potential nervousness experienced by some when they first arrive

Fun, joyful and engaging warm up exercises to start, encouraging humour, laughter and positive emotions.

No break during a session as this is seen to break the flow.

Explaining why singers are doing certain exercises helps engagement and understanding

Authentic, positive praise and picking out what singers did best

A comment on the new songs and the learned songs

Group should not be too small as it is difficult to keep a cohesive, inspirational, positive atmosphere and separation into rounds that create a professional sound. Around 30 seem good.

Space is important, as a 'dingy hall' is not appropriate to a positive experience. Good acoustics are appreciated and located where transport is easy to access

New songs

New songs with many words can be difficult to learn

Simple and straightforward songs seem easiest to learn. Sweet Potato and Limpsted Market were new to the group known by a few Jamaican participants, but now known by the whole group. Same as My home is in Montana and Bassez Down, now used as the greeting song.

Highlights

Think about bringing objects in that reflect the song and can trigger the memory of the song: e.g. sweet Potatoes

Limitations

A number of limiting factors have been identified that may have affected the project evaluation. Though there was just enough data to perform a means and standard deviation test, there was not enough viable data collected on participants to define any significant effects, particularly of songs repeated consecutively. There were too many songs to enable a robust pattern to emerge. These limitations identify potential weaknesses of the study, which resulted in performing a simple means test. We suggest the first 6-months are viewed as a pilot project in which to trial this method of capturing data and ironing out any problems. Although the final 6-months attempted to capture data in a more systematic way to see if there are substantial patterns emerging, songs were not repeated enough times to provide a secure evaluation, however when they were, it was possible to see patterns emerging.

Ideally a larger number of participants would have been selected for observation to provide a

larger data set and greater representation of the population as a whole. However, in 'real life' evaluation the project has to operate within what is feasible. The project observation was originally constructed with a sample sub set of 6 observable people; the entire group overview and 5 participants of which 3 were randomly selected and 2 chose as interesting case studies.

Five volunteers were trained to carry out the weekly observations of the 6. One volunteer would be present for most of the observable sessions, with ad hoc support from other volunteers and student interns. Two sheets with 3 of the observed on each were designed so that two volunteers would observe a different 3. Inter reliability was not formally tested at this stage; although the external evaluator also observed and compared observations to provide inter reliability.

Over the weeks, it was not always possible for two volunteers to carry out the observation due to tasks to be carried out or supporting participants, so one was allocated throughout the second phase. This provided more consistency to the data collection, although bias may have been present and there was no inter-reliability to ensure against this. Often only 1 sheet was filled in, so data was sometimes missing, incomplete, or duplicated so was not always reliable. This became apparent during the analysis stage, when the evaluator decided to analyze certain data that had the most participant observations (The Warm-ups) and then select 3 of the 6 that had attended constantly and had the most frequent observed data collected.

An outlying score was recorded during most sessions, clearly demonstrated by the Standard Deviation results and observations. However, as we have argued earlier, this might represent a cultural difference, which in most cases is useful so that all members feel they are included.

Limited data to warm-ups as there ere very few sheets completed that documented enough participants. Cool down was not analyzed, as there was little data.

Discussion

It is possible to provide qualitative details about the sessions. LNST promotes the self-expression and participating of older people in a singing group. This inclusive project gives these people the means, facilitated by exceptional facilitators and volunteers, to produce significant singing in an important centre for older people with or without dementia in one of the most deprived areas in the UK.

The quality of the participative process by which participants were engaged was very high. All participants are included in the session and a wide and diverse breadth of songs and repertoire are provided. This reflects in the standard deviation scores, which suggest there is a very varied repertoire for people to engage with. Regardless of the different cultural backgrounds present within the group, there is substantial evidence that facilitators source different styles and types of repertoire to suit all needs and interests.

LNST provides a repertoire that is repeated over a period of weeks in order to develop cognition in participants. There is evidence to suggest that participants are responding to this as scores of repeated songs generally improve. However, the data was not cohesive enough to form a strong judgment about developments overall at this stage.

Positive mood is quite low overall, except with the Holly and the Ivy, Tinga Layo and Dream of Me. in the Taught Repertoire and In Life repertoire 1, Gung Hay Fat Choy, All I Want to do is Dream, Don't Fence Me In and You Are My Sunshine. This might not suggest that singing these songs is miserable, as overall the negative mood score is none. It might suggest that participants are very focused on what they are doing, and although smiling are not excessively demonstrating positive mood through laughter.

Whilst we have attempted to draw out the salient changes and effect of songs and repertoire, we suggest the musician in residence looks through the tables and assesses the data from a musical point of view to develop the programme over the next 6 months

Health Benefits

The external evaluation was initially going to test the wellbeing improvements of the group. However, the project had already commenced for some weeks before the external evaluator was brought in, so a pre- and post group test was unable to be performed. However, a member's scores, who consistently attended during phase 2 were analyzed and averaged to determine impact.

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