

**Operation Singing Nation: a case study towards fulfilling
the professional development needs of teachers in Ireland to
faciliate group singing.**

**Dedicated to the memory of
Sr Anna Hyland and Sue Furlong**

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Abstract

Operation Singing Nation: a case study towards fulfilling the professional development needs of teachers in Ireland to facilitate group singing.

Instantly cost-effective, accessible and inclusive, the voice as a musical instrument can guarantee access to and participation in music education to children in Ireland. Every child has an in-built musical instrument: providing children in Ireland with the opportunity to 'play' the voice gives them music education choices they would not otherwise be presented with. Using the voice to sing is a passport to solo and ensemble music-making in any discipline, as well as a lifetime of singing.

The author has facilitated group singing with non-auditioned children and more recently adults since 1997. First hand experience of holistically developing the skills to 'play' the voice provides equal opportunities for children and adults to spontaneously engage in active, creative and quality-led vocal music-making. A lasting outcome of these experiences, as many recent researches have revealed, is the transformative power of group singing to enhance and transform singers personally and educationally on a weekly basis. Engagement in continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities and more recently providing CPD to teachers and choir leaders has been key to the author's successful group singing facilitations and its vision-inspired revelations.

This dissertation reviews ten reports and initiatives over sixty-six years advocating the importance of music education for children and young people in Ireland. Nowhere in these reports or initiatives has the voice on its own been proposed or advocated for its guaranteed potential to provide access to and participation in music education for every child and young person in Ireland.

Key to empowering a group of teachers to facilitate group singing in their classroom as part of the dissertation research was determining their professional development needs in advance a summer course in July 2017. Key to empowering a nation of teachers is building a resource of inspirational tutors and mentors with an unfailing passion and belief in the transformative power of group singing. Creating awareness and understanding among policy makers, teachers, leaders, musicians and parents of the voice as a musical instrument, is key to achieving Creative Ireland's goal of access to and participation in music education for every child in Ireland by 2022.

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Chapter 1: Literature review

Singing is the most natural form of musical self-expression, for everyone can sing to some degree, whatever his status and background. We sing in church, in the pub, at the football match, in childhood and old age, for we have our instruments always with us.¹

Regardless of the number of instrumental music programmes advocated for and initiated in Ireland, there will inevitably be thousands of children who will never play or perform instrumental music. Every child however, can be given the opportunity to play and perform music by learning to ‘play’ the voice: the most cost-effective, accessible and inclusive musical instrument of all.

Chapter one assesses the relevant literature on the main topics pertaining to this case study. These include music and singing in Ireland relative to the physical, personal, social, overall health and educational benefits, and reasons why children and young people in Ireland today should be afforded the opportunity to engage in group singing. To this end the fundamentals of best practice to facilitate group singing are also outlined.

¹ Margaret Dillon, ‘A Brief Résumé’, in *Simply Singing* (Cork: Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór 1996), 72.

1.1 Music and singing in Ireland

Since 1952 a considerable amount of time, energy, money and effort has been invested in commissioning research on music education in Ireland. Notwithstanding this investment, music deteriorated with each passing decade until the introduction in 2010 of ‘Ireland’s National Music Education Programme’² Music Generation.

A review of findings and recommendations of ten publications and music initiatives over sixty-six years are outlined below. Central to many of these over the last twenty years is access to instrumental and vocal music for every child in Ireland in formal education.

While vocal music is an important element in most reports, vocal music has always been twinned with instrumental music. Vocal music on its own has never been advocated for in Ireland as an access route to music education for every child and young person.

1.1.1 Music in Ireland: A Symposium

When *Music in Ireland*³ was published in 1952 there were 5,400 primary schools and 500,000 pupils registered in Ireland. The report focused on the provision of Music within and outside formal education.

The frightening proportion of “non-singers” has practically vanished, and there are few parts of the country now in which one cannot get fairly good...sight-reading... the frigid indifference with which most teachers regarded the subject has been changed into a most

² <<http://www.musicgeneration.ie/about/>> [accessed 2 April 2018].

³ Aloys Fleischmann (ed.), *Muisc In Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952).

gratifying enthusiasm. This astonishing change has been achieved by: (1) a rational and detailed programme; (2) stimulating and highly effective methods of teaching; (3) annual Music Courses...These courses are surprisingly effective, but are restricted, in the same way as the work in the schools is restricted, by the inadequate staff available...The wonder is that so much has been achieved.⁴

Sixty-six years on, much of what was achieved above has been lost. In 1952, classroom singing was compulsory in Primary School. Singing was also being advocated for as the ‘obvious and inevitable’⁵ area of music to maintain in primary school as well as proposing it as a compulsory subject in secondary school.

...a great deal has yet to be done...The schools will have to concentrate on producing a race of intelligent listeners, rather than a race of mediocre performers...two of the suggestions...above are essential, namely that music be given a far higher place on the curriculum, and that the singing-class be made compulsory, as it is in primary schools.⁶

1.1.2 Deaf Ears?

In 1985, The Arts Council of Ireland appointed a committee to oversee the European Union’s European Year of Music. The purpose of the committee was ‘to use European Music Year to stimulate interest in music as a whole and try to seek ways of ensuring that this will be a continuing process, not just something that finishes on 31st December 1985’.⁷ Music education for every child in Ireland was a central issue for consideration. The committee with the support of The Arts Council commissioned a report on how music education was being provided for in Irish

⁴ Donnchadh Ua Braoin, ‘Music in the Primary Schools’, in A. Fleischmann (ed.), *Music In Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 37-38.

⁵ Ua Braoin, *Music in Ireland*, 42.

⁶ Larchet, *Music In Ireland*, 35.

⁷ Frank Casey and Máirtín McCullough, ‘Foreword’ in Donald Herron *Deaf Ears?* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985), v.

schools. *Deaf Ears?*⁸, published in 1985 was very damning of the music education being offered in our schools; one could say that it most definitely fell on deaf ears.

How many tens of thousands of Irish Primary school pupils find themselves in schools with teachers who, often through no fault of their own, are unable to teach music well, and for whom no support facilities...are available?...Is it any wonder that in the 1985 MRBI Poll...only five per cent of pupils said that music was very important? ...By any standards the state of music education is not a happy one in Ireland.⁹

1.1.3 Forum for Music In Ireland

The Forum for Music in Ireland established in June 1999 acted as an umbrella organisation for music in Ireland. Music in the primary school was the first area of focus. The committee submitted a paper to government titled *Music in the Primary School* to the then minister for Education and Science, which outlined

The continuing poor state of music in Irish primary schools has been of concern to musicians and music educators for many years...it is perfectly possible for a child to leave primary school without an education in music...the lack of a systematic music education in the primary school is having a serious negative impact on the life of the individual and on society as a whole. This deprivation...creates a circular problem, whereby the value of music is not understood because it has not been experienced.¹⁰

⁸ Herron, *Deaf Ears?*.

⁹ Benson, *Deaf Ears?* , vii, viii.

¹⁰ Joseph Ryan, 'Music in the Primary School: Submission to the Minister of Education and Science', (unpublished, 2001), 2.

1.1.4 A National System of Local Music Education Services: *Report of a Feasibility Study*.

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands made a commitment in 2001 to fund a practical research to investigate how to establish a national system of publicly supported local music schools in Ireland. In response, a report prepared by Music Network was launched in 2003 titled *A National System of Local Music Education Services: Report of a Feasibility Study*. The report investigated how a network of publicly supported music schools might be established in Ireland, to address the gap in instrumental and vocal music within music education. The report recommends ‘a pragmatic model of cost-effective service provision to address those gaps’.¹¹

1.1.5 Music Education National Debate

The final *MEND Music Education National Debate* report in response to the 1985 *Deaf Ears?*, was published in 2002.

Apart from the need to address and to solve...the ongoing problem of the destabilization of music education...It stresses the need for the underpinning of music education with some consensus on a contextual philosophy suited to the uniqueness of the Irish case...Assuming a healthy school music curriculum to be the only safe and logical means of realizing the aspiration of ‘music for all’, this report cautions against indiscriminate overloading of the curriculum...The importance of teacher training is emphasized...¹²

¹¹ Music Network, ‘Executive Summary’ in *A National System of Local Music Education Services*, (Dublin: Music Network, 2003), 1.

¹² Frank Henegan, ‘Foreword’, in *Music Education National Debate* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology, 2002), 10-11.

1.1.6 Raising Your Voice

Raising Your Voice 2008, commissioned by The Arts Council as part of ‘Partnership for the Arts’ re-examined The Arts Council’s relationship with choral music in Ireland. Developmental needs outlined in the executive summary are

...increased prioritisation of choral activity within the formal education system and curricula, and a higher profile for choral singing in both primary and second level teacher training. A need for choral specialists to support the development of in-school choral activity is highlighted.¹³

Ironically, seventy-seven years earlier in the 1930s singing was classed as a ‘continuation subject’¹⁴ to ensure singing would continue from primary to secondary.

1.1.7 Music Generation

Music Generation’s partnership programme launched in 2011 emerged from Music Network’s 2003 feasibility study to develop a National System of Local Music Education Services in instrumental and vocal music. As a result thousands of children in various parts of Ireland are currently participating in instrumental and vocal music programmes and performances in formal education and in the community.

Three partnerships programmes were established in 2011. By 2014 this had increased to eight. In September 2017 a further nine Music Generation partnerships

¹³ Fergus Sheil, ‘Executive Summary’, in *Raising Your Voice: towards a policy for the development of choral music in Ireland* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 2008), 1.

¹⁴ Curtis, *Music in Ireland*, 45.

were announced. The Irish government's Creative Ireland *Creative Youth* plan¹⁵ launched in December 2017 aims to extend Music Generation nationwide.

Music Generation partnerships operate on matched funding. This means tuition can be offered in formal education and community settings at a lower cost than existing private tuition. This is welcome news for parents and schools in Music Generation areas. The lower tuition costs made possible by partnership funding has however, more than likely impacted negatively on existing providers in the same area.

In 2016 Music Generation published *Possible Selves in Music*. This report is 'a summary of the outcomes of a research project on the founding principles, diverse contexts and structures of Music Generation, the purpose of which is to develop the transformative experiences in music for children and young people'.¹⁶ In a research project such as this summary of outcomes, some level of criticism is expected but there is a lack of negative outcomes addressed in *Possible Selves in Music*.

Music Generation has most definitely addressed the gap in the provision of instrumental and vocal tuition in many areas of Ireland since 2011. Music Generation is however, not established in every county in Ireland nor is it in every school in the counties where partnerships are established. In 2018 the gap that urgently needs addressing is providing access to tuition and participation in music to the thousands of children who will never play or perform instrumental music.

¹⁵ Creative Ireland, 'Strategies for delivering the pillar 1 vision', in *Creative Youth: a plan to develop the creative potential of every child and young person*, (Dublin: Creative Ireland, 2017), 15.

¹⁶ Patricia Flynn and Thomas Johnston, *Possible Selves in Music*, (Dublin: Music Generation, 2016), 2.

1.1.8 Creative Ireland Programme

Sixty-six years on from the *Music in Ireland* report, and thirty-three years on from *Deaf Ears*, music education for every child in Ireland is once again at the core of an all-of-government initiative titled Creative Ireland, launched in December 2016. The first of five pillars of the *Creative Ireland Programme* is ‘Enabling the Creative Potential of all children and young people’.¹⁷

1.1.9 Sing Yourself Better

Sing Yourself Better by Hilary Moss of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance was published in 2017. The research document ‘explored the health and well-being benefits associated with choir singing from the perspective of the choristers themselves’¹⁸. Participants ranged in age from eighteen years to ninety thus advocating singing in a choir as an activity for life. *Sing Yourself Better* is the largest international study to have taken place to date as well as the first Irish study in Ireland to document the overall health benefits for adults singing in choirs.

1.10 It’s the Taking Part That Counts

Launched in December 2017, *It’s the Taking Part that Counts* is part of a research project by Helen Doyle in partnership with the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama described as

... a nationwide initiative to get Ireland’s schools singing...to celebrate school-based choral activity while demonstrating its powerfully transformative effects on school communities, thus encouraging every school in Ireland to get involved in choral singing¹⁹

¹⁷ Creative Ireland, *Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022*, (Dublin: Creative Ireland, 2016), 22-23.

¹⁸ Hilary Moss, ‘Summary’ in *Sing Yourself Better*, (Limerick: Irish World Academy of Music and Drama, 2017)

¹⁹ <<http://artsineducation.ie/en/2017/10/25/its-the-taking-part-that-counts-feis-ceoil-celebrate-120-irelands-school-choirs/>> [accessed 31 March 2018].

Group singing is without doubt a fundamental pathway to providing access to music education to all children in Ireland. Learning to ‘play’ the voice also provides every child and young person with music education choices they would otherwise not have; singing can awaken further interest in exploring other areas of music including instrumental music.

1.2 Why sing?

Imagine there was no music in the world. No one sang. No one played instruments. No one listened to beautiful melodies or danced to powerful rhythms...All forms of play would have to be outlawed, because play and music arise from the same basic instinct – to create, to express, to experiment, to be alive! It is no coincidence that music is of central importance in so many cultures of the world. To many, music is not just an important part of life – music is life itself. Music is alive and by singing and creating sounds we become more alive.²⁰

While researching definitions of a musical instrument the voice does not feature in any list or description. Society in general does not perceive the voice as a musical instrument. This may be because the voice cannot be seen; it is not tangible.

In order to achieve the Irish government's Creative Ireland programme goal of providing every child and young person in Ireland with 'practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music... by 2022',²¹ policy makers, teachers, leaders, musicians and parents must begin to think about and explore the potential of using the voice as a means to achieving access and participation for all children and young people to engage in music.

Being part of a group that is involved in the creation of communal sound is a wonderful experience, whatever the age of the pupil or student. Much has been written about the act of singing and the loss of this essentially primal social activity from our culture is to be deeply regretted.²²

²⁰ Nick Page, 'Why Music in the Classroom?', in *Music as a way of knowing* (Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1995), 7.

²¹ Creative Ireland, *Creative Youth: A plan to enable the creative potential of every child and young person*, 11.

²² Lyn Darnley and Stephanie Martin (eds), 'Words in the classroom', in *The Teaching Voice* (London: Whurr Publishers Ltd, 2nd edn 2004), 91.

Singing is a form of music. ‘Music belongs to everyone’.²³ Innate singing ability is inherent in all children, young people and adults. Through singing as in speech we can express feelings, needs, opinions, tell stories, relay experiences and future dreams. The ability to sing and use the voice to create music has a rightful place in everyone’s life.

State Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.²⁴

One way to guarantee access to music education, and offer equal cultural and artistic participatory opportunities is to engage children in group singing in a progression path from pre-school to primary and finally secondary school; referred to in the 1952 *Music In Ireland* report as continuation education.

In many African cultures...singing as a way of life forms the basis for family and community ritual and ceremony. There is little separation between singing and everyday life.²⁵

1.2.1 Physical benefits of group singing

When a person sings, their body becomes the body of the musical instrument called the voice. Singing encourages a deeper connection, understanding and awareness of the overall body as the means by which music is created by the voice.

²³ Erkki Pohjola, ‘Foreword’, in Doreen Rao *We Will Sing* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. 1993).

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, <<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html>> [accessed 19 February 2017].

²⁵ Bill Perison and Doreen Rao, ‘Opening the Circle: Foundations and Reflections’, in *Circle of Sound Voice Education* (Boosey & Hawkes, 2005), 2.

When the [singing] voice is used to communicate, it is not just the larynx and the organs of speech that are involved in the process, but the whole body...the spine, and the relationship of the pelvis, ribcage, head, neck and shoulder girdle to the spine have a significant effect on the [singing] voice.²⁶

Breath is the core element of the body that allows music to be created by the voice. Breathing is fundamental to good singing. Singers can be brought to an awareness of breath entering and leaving their bodies through simple everyday analogies: smelling flowers to feel the in-breath and blowing out candles to feel the out-breath. Music is created solely from within the body as if playing your own personal wind instrument.

Singing is a sensory-motor phenomenon that requires particular balanced physical skills.

When these skills are developed in a sensitive performer singing becomes an art.²⁷

1.2.2 Personal and social benefits of group singing

It is not enough for music educators, educational institutes and government agencies in Ireland to advocate for music for music's sake in this instance singing for singing's sake.

Artistic practices and artistic values existed long before the emergence of the... European notion of "art for art's sake... There is...evidence that our earliest human ancestors...engaged in what most reasonable people would recognize as creative artistic endeavours: dancing, drawing, music making, painting, sculpting, and so forth...it is not unreasonable to

²⁶ Darnley and Martin, *The Teaching Voice*, 52.

²⁷ Meribeth Bunch, 'Introduction', in *Dynamics of the singing voice* (New York: SpringerWeinNewYork, 4th edn 1997) 1.

speculate...that music-like vocalizing or “singing” was a common human practice even earlier.²⁸

Creating music can be reimagined through singing to tell stories, learn about people, places and history, discover the wonders of nature, explore Irish and international culture and language, bring poetry to life, and articulate beliefs, fears, hopes and dreams.

Music-making is also now recognised as a means of engaging marginalised communities, connecting youth, enriching communities and combating disadvantage. It remains a deep and satisfying human endeavour, in any genre. It is an endeavour in which practitioners may wish to excel at various levels through sustained engagement, practice and the mentorship of a skilled musician. Its expressive capacity to engage and connect at a deep level is understood. Its role in shaping and communicating identity is now more widely understood.²⁹

The multi-cultural classroom of today offers an opportunity to develop or begin to introduce songs from different cultures. Singing enhances the lives of, and gives a sense of belonging to children new to our schools, many of who struggle with language and communication skills. In *Singing The Right to Belong* Helen Phelan says, ‘I have heard many migrants declare that singing is what brings them closest to the home they have left behind and gives the most comfort and energy in negotiating their emerging home in Ireland.’³⁰

²⁸ Wayne D. Bowman, David J. Elliott and Marissa Silverman, ‘Introduction, Aims and Overview’, in *Artistic Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 3-4.

²⁹ Flynn and Johnston, *Possible Selves In Music*, 9.

³⁰ Helen Phelan, ‘Introduction’, in *Singing the rite to belong* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.

For a number of children who engage in group singing, this may be the one and only time during the day they feel equally valued alongside their peers regardless of academic ability. Given these benefits Dmitri Kabalevsky's statement that 'Every class should be a choir'³¹ stands strong.

The accessibility of particular art forms can help create a more equal playing field among young people... [Group Singing does this] Through the artistic process, young people can explore and create their own image of success. They can express who they are, their identity and their culture. High quality engagement with an art form can provide young people with creative experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies. These experiences are authentic and meaningful.³²

Achievement in individual or group activity is an essential experience for all children. These achievements no matter how small build self-confidence, self-worth and a give a sense of belonging and equality. When children sing together they are creating something very special where each singer is valued for the individual contribution they make to the group achievement and success; something that may not be possible to achieve as individuals.

...choral music is perhaps the only area of human endeavour in which the most complete and perfect example of a significant art form is found in the work of children...in choral music, the fine children's ensemble is in itself the perfect embodiment of the highest and most mature example of that art form. Adults cannot do it better. Children are the pinnacle of that art...children are capable of approaching and understanding music of exceptional maturity, which expresses wonderful and mature themes...to involve children in such experiences is to

³¹ Pohjola, *We Will Sing*.

³² Anne O'Gorman (ed) and Majella Perry, 'The Arts & Young People', in *Creating Magic*, (Dublin: National Youth Council of Ireland 2013), 15.

enable them to reach beyond themselves and to model the maturity that, if not yet achieved, will one day be theirs.³³

Children involved in sporting activities know what it feels like to achieve as part of a team. There are many children however, who choose not to be involved in sport simply because they do not like it. This can impact greatly on a pupils' overall sense of belonging particularly in schools where participation in sport is prioritised. While after-school opportunities to engage in other artforms and sports activities are available in the community these may however, not be within reach due to financial constraints, family circumstances in relation to transport and working schedule of parents. This is why arts activities must stand equally alongside sporting activities within the formal education system.

Group singing in school allows each child experience the feeling of what it is like to work together as a team side by side, and in doing so respect and value each other towards a sense of belonging that they may otherwise not experience. This is particularly important for boys with no interest in sport who find themselves in schools where sport is prioritised. In addition group singing gives teachers the opportunity to enhance the emotional development of students, which is crucial to everyday life particularly in relation to overall health and well-being.

1.2.3 Health and well-being benefits of group singing

Vocal music should be taught and practiced in every scholastic institution, and not in primary schools alone... No one can watch a choir successfully singing fine choral music without seeing that no other activity, social or artistic, creates the same intense feeling of delight,

³³ G. Morton 'Modern Music', in Heather J. Buchanan and Matthew W. Mehaffey (eds), *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir* (3 vols, Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2005), i, 47.

physical, mental, spiritual and moral, evokes such a complete manifestation of the whole personality, generates such vivid enthusiasm and ambitious striving, affords such opportunity for spontaneous yet harmonious communal effort, or results in such complete self-expression.³⁴

The language above from the 1952 *Music in Ireland* report is more akin to the many worldwide advocacy documents we read and hear today highlighting the personal benefits in relation to character building and overall health and well-being.

Self-discipline, community spirit, participation in creative work and the opportunity to live an expressive life for those living in rural areas are also referred to in this report in relation to teaching and practicing vocal music.³⁵

Sixty-six years later promoting ‘individual, community and national wellbeing’³⁶ is placed at the core of the Government of Ireland’s Creative Ireland programme which aims to provide access to tuition and participation in music for every child in Ireland by 2022.

Making music through singing goes beyond the act of singing. It has been scientifically proven that group singing can raise the level of endorphins, decrease levels of stress and help alleviate anxiety. Worldwide evidence is continuously increasing in relation to the impact group singing has on overall health and well-being.

³⁴ Ua Braoin, *Music In Ireland*, 37-44.

³⁵ Ua Braoin, *Music In Ireland*, 39.

³⁶ Creative Ireland, *Creative Youth: A plan to enable the creative potential of every child and young person*, 1.

...the benefits of community singing have shown that diverse samples of singers report a range of social, psychological, and health benefits associated with singing... Research has also assessed the impact of singing on physiological variables assumed to have well-being and health implications. Several studies... have assayed levels of immunoglobulin A in saliva taken from participants before and after singing, and reported significant increases, pointing to enhanced immune system activity...³⁷

The breath awareness needed for singing can help relax the mind and body in times of stress. Breath is also connected to mindfulness with regard to enhancing overall health and wellbeing. Many primary schools have recently started to introduce mindfulness as part of the school day. 'Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally'.³⁸ When children sing they are focussing their attention in a different way that is conscious and intentional therefore the act of singing may be considered as a form of mindfulness.

Using your voice to *sing* something may be different from the way you use your voice to *say* something. Singing requires *concentration, coordination and control*.³⁹

The Sidney De Hann Research Centre for Arts and Health in England published four separate series under the heading *Singing, Wellbeing and Health: context, evidence*

³⁷ Stephen Clift, Grenville Hancox, Barbel Hess, Gunter Kreutz, Ian Morrison, Don Stewart, *Choral Singing Wellbeing and Health: Summary of Findings from a Cross-national survey* (Kent: Canterbury Christchurch University, 2008), 3.

³⁸ Jon Kabat-Zinn, 'The Bloom of the Present Moment', in *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation for Everyday Life* (London: Piatkus Books 2004), 4.

³⁹ Rao, *We Will Sing*, 17.

*and practice*⁴⁰ that outline the benefits of singing on patients with Mental health issues, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Dementia and Parkinson's.

Overall health and well-being has a direct impact on everyone's mental health, in particular the mental health of children. In Ireland, 'the number one health issue for young people is their mental health'.⁴¹ Group singing has the potential to impact positively on the mental health of children and young people and act as a preventative to mental health issues as they progress from pre-school to primary and secondary education.

For the purpose of this document it is necessary to define mental health.

A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.⁴²

In addition to the above definition, the constitution of the *World Health Organisation* also states:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.⁴³

The formative years are crucial to the development of children. Children are most vulnerable during these years. Everyday experiences help shape and build character

⁴⁰ Stephen Clift and Ian Morrison, *Singing and Mental Health* (Kent: Canterbury Christchurch University, 2012), 2.

⁴¹ Barbara Dooley and Amanda Fitzgerald, *My World Survey National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland* (Dublin: Headstrong, 2012),vii.

⁴² World Health Organisation <http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/> [accessed 30 September 2017]

⁴³ World Health Organisation <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/>> [accessed 30 September 2017]

and impact directly on the personal, social and emotional development of children and young people. *My World Survey National Study of Youth Mental Health* posed an open-ended question to young adults asking them to list their top three coping strategies in times of trouble. Music was one of the top three.

The most frequently reported way of coping were 1) friends, 2) talking, 3) music, 4) family and 5) exercise.⁴⁴

The survey did not elaborate as to whether this was actively participating in a musical activity or simply listening to music but either way it makes an important statement about the role of music in the lives of children and young people.

1.2.4 Educational benefits of group singing

...there is a need for more singing in our schools and cultural institutions...New research in a variety of fields shows exciting and important proof of music's many powers to shape and charge our minds, bodies and spirits...Singing can enhance the studies of other cultures. Singing strengthens listening, which then strengthens every activity from silent reading to group discussions. Singing charges the brain, increasing children's learning potential... helps stimulate the desire to learn, and...helps to form strong communities.⁴⁵

Every child has the innate musical ability to use the voice to sing, just as every child possesses the innate ability to use the voice to communicate through speech. Singing is as natural an activity as everyday speech.

We think of speech as being easy, but creating music [singing] as being challenging...creating and improvising music [singing] can be just as easy as carrying on a

⁴⁴ Dooley and Fitzgerald, *My World Survey National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland* .

⁴⁵ Nick Page, Preface *Sing and Shine On!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995), vii.

conversation. Music [singing] is communication. Music [singing] is play. And most importantly, music [singing] is for all of us, not just the specialists.⁴⁶

Text in a song distinguishes the voice as a musical instrument from other familiar everyday instruments. Many of us recall learning important information through singing.

Children's first songs are about objects and activities in their immediate world. They become part of the songs. They find identity in the songs. The words "I" and "Me" are in all the great children's songs. When the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" says "How I wonder what you are," it is the child who wonders...As a child's world expands, the subject matter of his or her songs expands. Songs about "we" and "them" become acceptable. The child's world is growing along with his or her identity.⁴⁷

The text of a song gives children the opportunity to engage in cross-curricular, multi-genre, meaningful music-making experiences. Following the text on a page develops inner hearing, which is a fundamental element of reading. Singing songs from an early age aids language and speech development as well as the focus needed for reading from left to right in relation to eye movement. It also strengthens the ability to listen. Learning new words through singing, is another educational outcome for younger children when singing new words and seeing them for the first time on the page.

...the ability to hear sound silently in the head is an essential skill for children, particularly in their transition to silent reading...Every child makes a transition between reading out loud and reading silently. When we sing, we do not sing with our mouths only. Our ears are equal

⁴⁶ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 8.

⁴⁷ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 13-14.

partners. Singing is an act of listening and recreating with our voices what we hear. We listen internally – in our heads. Singing with young children strengthens their ability to hear internally, and this is a great aid in the transition towards silent reading – towards the internalisation of words.⁴⁸

Singing enhances and precipitates learning from memory. A combination of word structure, rhythm of the words when put to music alongside repetition of words and melody causes the muscles to remember, resulting in making it easier to learn from memory. Speaking in rhythm or in the style of a rap also aids memorisation. Many of us recited maths tables, spellings and poetry in rhythm as a class group. When children do this together they learned together and retained the learning from day to day.

Information can be learned and recalled at a faster pace through singing or chanting in rhythm than through spoken word. Learning the alphabet is more than likely one of the earliest experiences we had of learning important information through song.

The ability to sequence activities or thoughts and retain them is a necessary learning skill. Because of entrainment and the rhythms of learning, it is easier for a child to learn a song or a rap than it is to learn a history lesson or math table. The brain seems to work musically – learning with the aid of music becomes almost effortless.⁴⁹

The activity of singing lends itself very naturally to cross-curricular learning and cultural diversity. The song *Banaha*⁵⁰ will be used as a specific example of employing teaching methods in chapter two. *Banaha* is a cross-curricular Congolese

⁴⁸ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 10, 29.

⁴⁹ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 11.

⁵⁰ <<http://canarywharfchoir.org/2012SpringChoir/Banaha.pdf>> [accessed 2nd October 2017]

folk song that can be linked to Geography, Art, History, Language and Dance. Numeracy can be incorporated by counting beats and asking questions as to how many times a particular phrase or bar appears as well as finding similar music patterns or sequences similar to mathematics.

In the past, music education had viewed “musical understanding” as something different from musical performing. Today we know that when students perform musically, they are *demonstrating their knowledge* – they are *singing their understanding*. The ability to sing in a choir counts as a form of knowledge. This kind of *thinking-in-action* inures our students the opportunity to learn more about themselves and more about the world around them.⁵¹

Practical reasons to choose group singing as an inclusive, accessible and cost-effective means to access music education for every child and young person in Ireland are; everyone possesses a singing voice, there is no capital cost involved, you don't need to be a brilliant solo singer to be part of a choir, people who engage in group singing are delighted to achieve as part of a team what they may never achieve as individuals. Group singing strengthens listening, encourages focus and concentration, motivates learning, aids learning from memory and enhances overall well-being. Text in a song provides many important educational and cross-curricular benefits. Finally, what is difficult or challenging to articulate through spoken voice is more easily articulated through song while also impacting the listener on a deeper level.

Singing in a choir can change lives. It can turn a bad day into a better one. Singing can transform people...transport audiences to a place that is indescribable...bring people to tears

⁵¹ Rao, *We Will Sing*, xiv.

or put smiles on their faces. As Isaac Stern said, “Music touches directly from the soul of the creative artist to the listener”.⁵²

⁵² Barbara M. Tagg, ‘Promotion and fundraising’, in *Before the Singing: Structuring children’s choirs for success*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 127.

1.3 The fundamentals of best practice in group singing

Success in employing best practice techniques in group singing naturally aligns with one's level of knowledge of the same. This chapter outlines three important first steps: unconscious musical knowledge, developing vocal confidence and internalising the score. All three steps involve using an 'inside out' approach towards successful facilitation of group singing; we know more than we think about singing.

1.3.1 Unconscious musical knowledge

Awareness is a form of musical understanding... 'we can know more than we can tell'.

Musical knowledge is more often a 'tacit knowing'. This is because the power of music is often greater than words can express.⁵³

Consider the high-pitched intermittent cooing sounds babies naturally make as they lie in their cot discovering and exploring the world around them. These vocalisations are more akin to singing than to speaking which surmises that humans sang long before they spoke; think of the high-pitched intermittent cooing sounds that babies naturally make as they lie in their cot.

There are many times throughout the day when children, young people and adults unknown to themselves engage in sounds akin to singing. The traditional 'na na na na na' we hear in the schoolyard chanted and sung by children is the sol-fa pitches so, mi, la, so, mi.

⁵³ Doreen Rao, *Choral Music Experience: Artistry in Music Education*, (12 vols, U.S.A.: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. 1987), 6.

Figure 1: Traditional schoolyard chant – ‘so, mi, la, so, mi,’



The author’s research discovered the vocalised ‘yoo hoo’ to call someone or get one’s attention is sometimes sung as a major third ‘so, mi’ and sometimes as a minor third ‘so, ma’.

Figure 2: ‘yoo hoo’ call as a major third – ‘so, ma,’

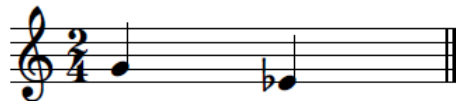
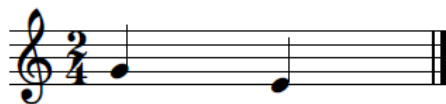


Figure 2: ‘yoo hoo’ call as a minor third - ‘so, mi,’



Similar unconscious vocalisations are simulating an ambulance or fire engine siren, the vocalised yawn experienced by many on waking and the ‘mmmm’ with pursed lips when tasting food or reacting to something nice. Hooting style owl sounds on ‘hoo-hoo’ is a valuable tool to help singers engage their head-voice and kinaesthetically feel their head-voice.

Songs we grew up with are another source to knowing more than we think we know.

The simple nursery rhyme *Three Blind Mice* that most children and adults are familiar with starts with the pitches ‘mi, re, do’

Figure 4: mi, re, do



Mary Had A Little Lamb, *Hot Cross Buns* and the traditional Christmas hymns *We Three Kings* and *The First Noel* also begin with ‘mi, re, do’. It is essential teachers are brought to an awareness and understanding of the importance these everyday vocal sounds and songs play in facilitating group singing. When shared through the call-and-response approach and understood by students, musical potential and capability naturally transfer to students.

Amazing Grace, *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and *Auld Lang Syne* are examples of songs based on the pentatonic scale do, re, mi, so, la.

Figure 5: Pentatonic scale



Cumulative songs such as *Old MacDonald Had A Farm* are also based on the pentatonic scale. These songs require concentration and focus as well as offering many musical learning opportunities for both teachers and students.

Using unconscious knowledge is key to unlocking the musical and singing potential of every child and adult. We know a lot more than we perceive about singing.

Curiosity for learning is awakened and learning takes place in a holistic way when this approach is used.

1.3.2 Developing vocal confidence

You don't need to play an instrument to use music in the classroom. You don't need to know how to read music. You don't need to know who Beethoven was or when the baroque period was. What do you need? You need to be alive. That's it. That is the basic requirement for being musical. You also need to trust your abilities as well as the abilities of your students. As children, we may have been asked to mouth the words of songs or been told we couldn't play an instrument. Nonsense! Everyone can sing and sing well, and everyone can learn to play an instrument.⁵⁴

While genuine interest, passion and enthusiasm for music education with children and young people will serve to motivate and build momentum to lead a song, it is of utmost importance one must be equally confident in being able to 'speak music in terms of singing'.⁵⁵ Confident vocal modelling is the foundation on which all other pedagogical skills related to singing can be learned and developed.

'That's great, but I'm not a musician. I'm afraid of doing music with my students'.⁵⁶

Pre-conceived ideas about what constitutes a good singer coupled with personal thoughts and experiences in relation to one's singing voices can often hinder teachers

⁵⁴ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 7-8.

⁵⁵ Edwin E. Gordon, 'The interpretation and instructional application of the primary measures of music audiation and the intermediate measures of music audiation' in *Primary Measures of Music Audiation and the Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation*, (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc. 1979 and 1986), 72.

⁵⁶ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 7.

in leading singing in the classroom. In addition there is the teacher who in front of their peers may as a child have been told they were not good enough, were singing incorrectly, were not able to sing, or were singing out of tune.

Such remarks are never child centered but are usually concerned with the teacher's...desire to produce a 'polished' performance for an adult audience. Suggestions to a child who finds maths difficult simply to refrain from completing the lesson would be seen as irresponsible, so why should it be acceptable to prevent some children from singing, when what they need to improve their pitching is more practice, not less.⁵⁷

1.3.3 Internalising the score

Regardless of one's experience in facilitating group singing, internalising the score of a song before teaching determines the success of the facilitation. Beginning with a song that you know very well will help guarantee a positive experience for you and your students. Standing up in front of a class group with no music or words gives a teacher the freedom to move around the room and connect with students by making eye contact as well as the freedom to use hands, facial expressions and body movements. All of these combined help to keep children musically engaged. The teacher can also demonstrate various examples of aural, visual and kinaesthetic approaches to teaching in keeping with the many ways children learn in the classroom today.

⁵⁷ Darnley and Martin, *The Teaching Voice*, 90.

Studying brings the notation to life; it makes the work personal... Score study trains the ear and awakens the heart... The insights we develop from this process are what motivates our rehearsal pedagogy and performance decisions.⁵⁸

Transforming unconscious music knowledge to conscious knowledge is fundamental to developing confidence in vocal modelling. Being vocally confident is key to internalising the score towards further developing the skills required to facilitate group singing. These skills are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

In *Music in Ireland* in 1952 John F. Larchet referred to singing as being the most easily perceived and self-evident area of music to implement and maintain in primary school. Despite knowing this, music today does not feature high on the primary school curriculum as was proposed in 1952. A strategy has yet to be put in place as advocated for in 1952, for singing to follow through as a continuation subject from primary education to secondary education.

The majority of Irish primary school children leave school musically illiterate, with little vocal or aural training and with a repertoire of songs that is usually learned by rote. As a consequence they have no worthwhile basis from which to extend their repertoire, or to avail of music as a subject at post-primary level, the curriculum for which is anyway quite discontinuous with that at primary level.⁵⁹

The 2002 *Music Education National Debate* MEND report advised against unsystematic overloading of the curriculum as outlined in 1.1.5 above. Despite this, the addition of languages, science and technology to the primary curriculum in recent

⁵⁸ Doreen Rao, 'Doreen Rao' in Melissa M. Mills *Working with Young Singers: Educational Philosophies of Expert Children's Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2017), 74.

⁵⁹ Benson, *Deaf Ears?*, vi.

years and emphasis on STEM education impact heavily on arts education provision, resulting in less time spent on arts education as well a reduction in attendance at music and arts courses.

This dissertation aims to determine and fulfil the professional development of teachers to facilitate group singing. Fulfilling these needs can potentially provide access to and participation to music education for every child and young person in Ireland.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Most of the teachers I work with believe that their students are amazing and wonderful...the most common reaction I hear from teachers is, “I’m not a good singer. I can’t lead songs.” In this I hear, “The children are amazing, but I’m not.”⁶⁰

In chapter one we learned that confident vocal modelling is fundamental to facilitating group singing. Teachers who are not vocally confident, must be given the opportunity to communicate the skills they need to allow them begin to engage or engage more in quality led group singing in the classroom.

...problems of intonation, rhythm, balance and phrasing are directly related to singing skill and vocal diction concepts... Without vocal expertise, we cannot fulfil our professional obligation to our students. Musical enthusiasm and vocal competency are the marks of teaching excellence.⁶¹

This chapter presents methodology related to assess subject knowledge and confidence in facilitating group singing. These will be employed in the case study of this research project, a Department Of Education summer course titled ‘Let The Children Sing’ in July 2017.

[Action based research] is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/or refining his or her actions.⁶²

⁶⁰ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher’s Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, vii.

⁶¹ Doreen Rao, *Choral Music Experience: The Young Singing Voice*, (12 vols, New York: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. 2nd edn 1987), v, 5.

⁶² Richard Sagor, ‘Guiding School Improvement with Action Research’, <<https://books.google.ie>> [accessed 5 February 2018].

In 2003-2004 fifty-four per cent of teachers responded to a Department of Education and Science survey of 354 newly qualified primary school teachers in Ireland. One aim of the survey was to identify areas of professional development that needed addressing. ‘They felt least prepared to teach music.’⁶³ Ironically, the Primary School Music Curriculum currently in use had been published in 1999 however, it took a few years for in-service to take place.

One of three critical issues and important findings of a study ‘Primary Music Education in the Absence of Music Specialists’ the *International Journal of Education and the Arts* (November 2008) relating to teacher knowledge was the classroom teachers’ ‘lack of subject knowledge with its connected issue, teacher confidence’.⁶⁴ The remaining issues ‘the teachers’ vision of musicianship and music pedagogy’ and ‘their lack of understanding of the importance of an aural framework for music teaching’ also relate to teacher confidence.⁶⁵ In addition, the article stated

most generalist teachers...articulated quite openly that they did not feel qualified to teach music...classroom observations revealed that their hesitancy and resultant lack of confidence were truly well founded.⁶⁶

A successful, rewarding and enjoyable group singing class depends on two types of confidence: confidence in one’s singing voice and confidence in employing the pedagogical skills to lead a song. Empowering teachers with confidence to facilitate group singing will enhance their experience of music and help guarantee access and participation of every child in the classroom in active music making.

⁶³ Ger Stack, ‘INTO Consultative Conference on Education’, in *Teacher Education The Continuum* (Dublin: INTO, 2006), 33-34.

⁶⁴ Wiggins & Wiggins, ‘Primary Music Education in the Absence of Music Specialists’, <<http://www.ijea.org/v9n12/v9n12.pdf>> [accessed 30 January 2018].

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ *ibid*

This chapter is divided into two sections, one outlines methods of collating data via research tools, the other outlines methods to develop vocal and pedagogical skills to give participants of 'Let The Children Sing' summer course the confidence required to facilitate Group-singing in the classroom.

Section A: Methods of collating data

2.1 Advance workshops

Two advance workshop demonstrations with potential summer course participants and students will inform the research to determine their professional development needs. A written personal reflection document is used in both workshops. The aim of the first reflection document is to find out as much information as possible about each participant: how or if they engage in group singing and what they require from the summer course to motivate them to begin or continue to develop this engagement. The potential to inform musical standards and confidence levels were to the fore when creating the documents.

2.1.1 Workshop one (Please refer to Appendix 1)

The first personal reflection document is completed by the teachers as they observe the workshop. To promote clarity and encourage concise answers, the document is divided into six sections that include instructions, headings and three questions. The layout ensures participants alternate with ease between observing and writing as the workshop unfolds. The open style approach provides space to express in writing what they require. One example of this is through asking participants to list elements that stood out while observing the workshop. This demonstrated participants' ability to identify teaching skills in others while indirectly encouraging reflection on their own skills and approaches to teaching.

The most important benefit of open-ended questions is that they allow you to find more than you anticipate: people may share motivations that you didn't expect and mention

behaviors and concerns that you knew nothing about...they often reveal surprising mental methods, problem-solving strategies, hopes, fears, and much more.⁶⁷

The document as opposed to a group discussion allowed for careful independent expression on the part of individual participants resulting in honest answers to help identify individual strengths, weaknesses and needs. On completion of the workshop participants are encouraged to lead one or both songs in their classrooms in advance of the next workshop.

2.1.2 Workshop two (Please refer to Appendix 2)

The second workshop took place seven weeks later after a two-week Easter break from school. The second personal reflection document seeks to find out if participants had engaged in teaching one or both songs and if so what challenges or unexpected outcomes they encountered.

The July 2017 Department of Education and Science (DES) approved summer course daily plan below was informed from the above research tools. The four headings and table format below are taken directly from the DES Summer Course application form.

⁶⁷ <<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/open-ended-questions/>> [accessed 19 February 2018].

2.1.3 Informed methodology for ‘Let The Children Sing’ summer course

| | Specific learning outcomes for participants | Content description | Methodologies used to engage participants | Participant’s activities, tasks or assignments to achieve the learning outcomes |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | Greater awareness and understanding of the voice as a musical instrument that everyone can learn to use confidently. Exploring connections with SSE – School Self-Evaluation. | Introducing the general outline, structure & aims of the course. Age-appropriate repertoire beginning with accessible songs that motivate learning through which technique is easily taught. | Warm-ups to awaken the singing voice. Addressing the various ways children learn every day –aural, visual and kinesthetic as well as effective use of imagination to build skills. | Preparation of repertoire for arrival of Children’s Ensemble on day two. Sharing previous teaching, learning and performing experiences to aid problem solving and inform planning for remainder of the course. |
| Day 2 | Building on learning outcomes from day one with children’s ensemble | Revision of skills from day one and adapting them to new repertoire. Introduction to Children’s Ensemble / lab choir. Using unison singing to create oneness in the voices. | Group vocal technique with Children’s Ensemble. Fun and engaging vocal activities to focus the group to work together as a team. Using sol-fa and Kodaly hand signs and how they relate to best practice in teaching singing. | Critical reflection of observing course leader work with Children’s Ensemble |
| Day 3 | The use of Group singing as a cross-curricular activity and its benefits in other areas of learning | Building on day one and two with new repertoire linked to other curriculum subjects and various themes used in the school throughout the year. | The relationship of physical gesture to sound – getting the children to use simple physical gestures to enhance their singing voice and teach various vocal techniques. | On-going critical reflection. Exploring and experiencing the effect of gesture on sound. Group assignment to create teaching ideas for a new song. |
| Day 4 | The potential for whole-school learning with specially selected repertoire with a view to all classes performing together at assembly | Repertoire that can be used throughout the whole school from Junior Infants to sixth class demonstrating extended learning on the same repertoire with senior classes. | Combining warm-ups, vocal technique and physical gestures from day one, two and three. Moving around the room while singing to feel beat and sense of musical line and articulation of text | On-going critical reflection. Teachers and children’s ensemble singing together as a choir. |
| Day 5 | The transformational power of Group-singing for both teacher and student. Using rounds / canons as an introduction to singing in parts | Performance by teachers and children of a selection of the repertoire used in previous four days. Investing time in evaluating performance and progress from day one | Combination of all of the above. | Final critical reflection feedback. Teachers and children’s ensemble singing together as a choir. |

2.2 ‘Let the Children Sing’ summer course

At the end of each day of the five-day summer course, participants are given post-its to document key learning moments which were displayed on a wall. On day three, participants are divided into groups and given an assignment to identify teaching elements in a new song towards consolidating methodologies from day one and two, while also giving participants the opportunity to reflect on what was learned. A teaching colleague of the author took a critical reflection role on day two, three four and five to documenting each session. A discussion on this reflective process is entered into each day. On the final day of the course a formal Department of Education and Science questionnaire, as well as one designed by the author and teaching colleague are completed by participants.

2.2.1 Choir-in-residence

The author used the Choral Music Experience⁶⁸ model of a children’s choir-in-residence on days two, three, four and five. The author experienced this model of learning over several years as part of her on-going professional development. The only difference was that the children attending the summer course had not prepared the repertoire in advance, this was intentional as the author wanted to give the participants the opportunity to observe teaching from scratch. Having a laboratory choir gives participants the opportunity to be part of a real classroom experience. Each day the schedule included an opportunity for adult participants to be part of the children’s choir, learn alongside them and observe the author working with the children.

⁶⁸ <<https://www.choralmusicexperience.com/>> [accessed 5 May 2018].

2.2.2 Follow-up reflection documents (Please refer to Appendix 3 and 4)

Participants completed two follow-up personal reflection documents. The first one distributed in November included four open-ended questions aimed at finding out how often participants facilitate group singing, has their confidence increased as a result of the summer course and have they explored new repertoire and applied any of the techniques learned. One final task is given: choose a song to teach in the classroom for a formal or informal performance in December 2017. Participants are asked if they would like to re-group in January or February 2018.

The final reflection document sent seven months after the summer course encompasses five questions. The first two are related to the final task given in the previous questionnaire. The next two seek to assess participants' levels of confidence since the course. The final part of the document informs participants of a potential follow-up course in July 2018 and asks them to outline particular challenges or techniques they might like to explore that would benefit them.

Section B: Methods and techniques to facilitate group singing

2.3 Choosing a song

Repertoire and the type of music is an important factor for motivating singers, but probably more important is the quality of the teaching or facilitating by the teacher or leader...⁶⁹

Choosing a song one is vocally confident with will help guarantee a successful and enjoyable pedagogical approach on the part of the facilitator and the resulting learning outcomes of their students. Key to the level of difficulty of the song is a teacher's perceived confidence and ability to sing the chosen song in front of the classroom. 'The success of the young singing voice is closely related to your ability to model vocal tone. You owe good singing to yourself and to your students.'⁷⁰

Chant-like and call-and-response songs are a good starting place for facilitators and students engaging in group singing for the first time. 'The easiest song to teach and lead is the call-and-response song.'⁷¹ Chant-like and call-and-response songs give facilitators and students the opportunity to use their spoken voice in a rhythmic way towards developing a natural transition from speaking to singing. The short intermittent bursts of singing help take the focus off the individual singing voice to allow the freedom of vocalisation to occur naturally. Call-and-response songs are also good vocal warm-up tools.

⁶⁹ Peter Hunt, 'Introduction', in *Voiceworks 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) vii.

⁷⁰ Rao, *Choral Music Experience: The Young Singing Voice*, v, 2.

⁷¹ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 49.

Unison singing is fundamental to successful part-singing. ‘A choir can sing in harmony, but the true test of unity comes when the choir sings in unison’.⁷² Quality time spent on unison singing helps develop oneness in the voices with no individual voice being prominent over others. This requires intense listening on the part of the facilitator. To this end the facilitator must not fall into the habit of singing with students.

In the initial stages of vocal development, it is important to sing melodic unison song material. Songs that are melodic and utilize a sufficient vocal range...will exercise the kinaesthetic sensations necessary in differentiating the singing voice from the speaking voice. With a foundation of good...expressive unison singing, successful part singing will follow.⁷³

Rounds or canons are a great foundation and introduction to part-singing as well as working from the known to the unknown; when singing familiar rounds, musical elements including notes values and literacy can be taught in a holistic way. They also require focussed listening and concentration on the part of the student.

Rounds and canons are wonderful to sing. They require participants to listen very carefully while singing, and anything that makes us listen is beneficial, both musically and academically.⁷⁴

⁷² Barbara M. Tagg, ‘Barbara M. Tagg’, in Melissa M. Mills, (ed.), *Working With Young Singers Educational Philosophies of Expert Children’s Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2017), 17-32.

⁷³ Rao, *Choral Music Experience: The Young Singing Voice*, v, 7.

⁷⁴ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher’s Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 76.

2.4 Know the score

How well a facilitator knows a song directly impacts how well they teach it.

‘...teacher-conductors cannot assume that musical skill and understanding will develop without careful planning and thoughtful teaching.’⁷⁵ A teacher will trust their ability to lead a song and become vocally confident when quality time is invested in learning and embodying the song, analysing every note and phrase in relation to teaching elements, and rehearsing the planned lesson in advance. A teacher who does not read music is advised to source a recording to aid learning and embodiment of the song. If there is a notated score do not dismiss it; consider the score as a map.

The majority of instrumentalists use letter names A, B, C, D, E, F and G when playing instruments and reading music. For children with no instrumental experience Tonic Sol-fa is a valuable teaching tool which provides the opportunity to relate each note to a named pitch and encourage deeper listening.

...reading solfa is relatively easy; young people are encouraged because they find themselves able to translate signs [for note names] into sounds readily, and because they are able to get to grips with notation in a simple way.⁷⁶

Tonic Sol-fa (TSF) is ‘a system of naming the notes of the scale (usually do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti) developed in England and used especially to teach singing, with ‘do’ as

⁷⁵ Doreen Rao ‘Choral performance as music education’, in *Choral Music Experience: Teaching children through choral music experience*, (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. 1991), iv, 5.

⁷⁶ W.G. Whittaker, ‘The Claims of Tonic Solfa’ *Oxford Journals*, 320-321.

the keynote of all major keys and ‘la’ as the keynote of all minor keys’.⁷⁷ Sol-fa pitch names can be written into a score as required. In keeping with the sound-before-symbol or known-to-unknown philosophy the score can be introduced to students at a later stage to develop pitch relation and music literacy.

‘...the belief that musical knowledge is best acquired through moving from the known (e.g. knowing the melody and words of a song), to the unknown (e.g. the isolation and naming of their rhythm patterns within the song) from the simple to the complex, and from an experience (e.g. clapping in time) to a conscious understanding of that experience (e.g. and understanding of pulse)’⁷⁸

2.5 Know the instrument

Fundamental to facilitating group singing with children is learning about the young singing voice. ‘The tone of the young singing voice is compelling in its clarity, magnetic in its purity; the young singing voice is a uniquely versatile instrument unlike any other.’⁷⁹ Regardless of instrumental and vocal experience teachers must familiarise themselves with the range of notes or tessitura that young singers should engage in when singing. This knowledge is important not only in relation to singing in the correct range but also to the vocal health of singers.

In order to sing with precision in pitch, a child must learn to sing in a singing voice range...It is the range within which a child can sing most comfortably, not necessarily the voice

⁷⁷ English Oxford Living Dictionaries <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/tonic_sol-fa> [accessed 1 February 2018].

⁷⁸ National Council for Curriculum Assessment, *Primary School Curriculum Music* (Dublin: The Stationary office, 1999), 8.

⁷⁹ Rao, *Choral Music Experience: The Young Singing Voice*, v, 3.

quality, that characterizes the child voice... The best songs for children to sing are those which have a tessitura of from D above middle C to B, a major sixth above.⁸⁰

Figure 6: Tessitura from D above middle C to B



Singing in the correct tessitura enables young singers to kinaesthetically feel and hear their voice. ‘The way the voice “feels” in the body becomes the student’s direct referent to determining the quality of the sound”.⁸¹ In addition to knowing the range of notes and tessitura for working with children, the facilitator must give the correct starting pitch to the children from a musical instrument, pitch pipe or mini piano application available on most smart phones and devices today.

Conformity is required of school age children in formal singing and movement performance because they must learn to audiate, that is, to sing silently and to use their muscles covertly, in order to comprehend what they hear.⁸²

Vowels are fundamental to successful group singing lessons. Vowels sustain the varying lengths of the words that fit the melody. Vowels can be bright or dark, open or closed. Vowels are to singing as colours are to artists; the singing tone depends on the colour of the vowel. ‘The vowels have to be as tall as possible, and forward and

⁸⁰ Gordon, *Primary Measures of Music Audiation and the Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation*, 78- 80.

⁸¹ Rao, *Choral Music Experience: The Young Singing Voice*, v, 9.

⁸² Gordon, *Primary Measures of Music Audiation and the Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation*, 81.

clear'.⁸³ Facilitators interested in leading group singing classes must familiarise themselves with the following vowels. There are five basic singing vowels.

Table No. 1 Five basic singing vowels⁸⁴

| IPA Symbol | Phonetic Sound | Word Example |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| i | ee | me |
| e | ay | ate |
| a | ah | father |
| o | oh | obey |
| u | oo | too |

2.6 Approaches to teaching

I try to prepare several different approaches for the same goal: one that is kinaesthetic, one that is cognitive, one that is aural, and one that is visual and then I use any of those four depending on the response of the children.⁸⁵

The activity of music making through singing involves many teaching and learning approaches. In education these terms are often referred to as visual, aural and kinaesthetic. An effective facilitator must commit to incorporating as many

⁸³ Anne Tomlinson, 'Anne Tomlinson', in Melissa M. Mills (ed.), *Working With Young Singers Educational Philosophies of Expert Children's Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2017), 7.

⁸⁴ Doreen Rao, *We Will Sing* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1993), 29

⁸⁵ Anne Tomlinson, 'Ann Tomlinson', in Melissa M. Mills (ed.), *Working With Young Singers Educational Philosophies of Expert Children's Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2017), 8.

approaches to teaching as possible so the learning needs of each student are catered for. ‘We learn through seeing, hearing, feeling – through all the senses’.⁸⁶

Some children are strong aural learners and will pick up a melody very quickly by ear. Visual learners like to see the music and text including the shape of the musical phrases. Kinaesthetic learners need to feel the music.

The more ways of learning are used in education, the more effective that education becomes...This includes the intelligence of the body – the memory of movement. It includes spatial intelligence – the ability to perceive and draw objects.⁸⁷

Every child will benefit in some way from a combination of visual, aural and kinaesthetic teaching tools. It is important the voice is not separated from the body. Involving the body promotes greater musical engagement on the part of the singer. Using movement also aids muscle memory. Having children draw a rainbow with one arm as they sing a phrase will further enhance legato singing as their voice automatically mirrors the arm as it draws the rainbow.

Human life has many functions in nature which can be taken out of their original settings and applied systematically to voice building...The instrument of the singer is the human body; many parts of that instrument are not visible. The voice teacher must resort to imagination, fantasy, and images to teach his students...The learning of vocal technique should become a music activity and in the same moment, music education. The key is to choose life activities for transformation into vocal technique exercises.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Nick Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995), 40.

⁸⁷ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 10.

⁸⁸ Frauke Haasemann and James M. Jordan (eds), *Group Vocal Technique* (Carolina: Hinshaw Music, Inc., 1991), 3-5.

All approaches and techniques are transferable and interchangeable from song to song. When taught in the context of the song being taught children are brought to a greater awareness and understanding of the approaches and techniques and the reasons behind them. This holistic approach to teaching is more meaningful and enjoyable for both teacher and student.

2.7 Specific example of employing teaching methods

Banaha is a Congolese folksong with a singing range in keeping with the tessitura suggested by Edwin Gordon in 2.3 above. Directly relating the teaching methods and techniques to a song adds to the holistic approach: the elements are to be always taught with connection to the song. *Banaha* is a perfect example of a cross-curricular song for whole-school learning or assembly and intergenerational community groups.

Banaha

Congolese folksong

1

s m s m s l s d r m m m m d r d
Si - si, Si - si, Do-la-da, Ya-ku si-ne la-du ba-na - ha.

5 Fine 2

s m s m s l s d r m m m m d r d d r
Si - si, Si - si, Do-la-da, Ya-ku si-ne la-du ba-na - ha. Ba-na -

9

m r m f m f s s s s s f m d r
ha, Ba - na - ha, Ya - ku si - ne la - du ba - na - ha. Ba - na -

13

m r m f m f s s s s s f m
ha, Ba - na - ha, Ya - ku si - ne la - du ba - na - ha.

17 3

d' t d' l d' d' t t t t t l s
Ha, ba - na - ha, Ya - ku si - ne la - du ba - na - ha.

21 D.C. al Fine

d' t d' l d' d' t t t t t l s
Ha, ba - na - ha, Ya - ku si - ne la - du ba - na - ha.

Whether using the notated score or listening to a recording of *Banaha*⁸⁹, a good starting point is to make a list of the elements to be taught, the perceived skills required to lead the song, and the possible challenges for both teacher and singers.

⁸⁹ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXet5PAo-O4>> [accessed 17 February 2018].

The list will inform the lesson plan and the order of teaching. The text outlined below will be a new experience for most singers.

| Phonetic phrases including the Da capo | Amount of times phrase is repeated | Same melody each time | Same rhythm each time |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| See-see, See-see, doe-lah-dah | 4 | Yes | Yes |
| Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah | 8 | No, there are three different melodies – 1&2, 3&4, 5&6 with 1&2 repeated on the Da capo. | Yes |
| Bah-nah-hah, Bah-nah-hah | 2 | Yes | Yes |
| Hah, Bah-nah-hah | 2 | Yes | Yes |

2.7.1 Warm-up

As *Banaha* involves learning a new language, begin with a rhythm warm-up.

Launching into a rhythm warm-up with no verbal instruction immediately engages the singer’s focus and attention and is a great example of the power of non-verbal communication.

I will create a warm-up using rhythmic and melodic patterns from the music...This way...the singers are already familiar with the particular rhythmic problem or unusual tonality. When those things pop up in the piece, the singers already know how to handle them. They feel a stronger sense of confidence, accomplishment, and motivation to learn the piece.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Betty Bertaux, ‘Betty Bertaux’, in Melissa M. Mills (ed.), *Working With Young Singers Educational Philosophies of Expert Children’s Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2017), 33-50.

Select a two-bar phrase in *Banaha* and fit the rhythm into a stamp/clap or slap/clap action. The call-and-response or in this instance my-turn-your-turn method is a perfect fit for this warm-up. Demonstrate the rhythm pattern confidently with energy and enthusiasm. ‘This assumes that you, the teacher, are excited...and convey that excitement...students will not only echo what you sing [or speak], but will also echo your energy.’⁹¹ To maintain focus and attention avoid long gaps between the demonstration and the response.

Using call-and-response, invite students to chant the text of *Banaha* one phrase at a time in rhythm. Having used the rhythm in the stamp/clap warm-up will make it easier to chant the text. This known-to-unknown approach allows students to hear the text without the melody and kinaesthetically feel what it is like to chant the text, as well as discovering the articulators needed to chant clearly: the lips, teeth and tongue.

Use the first two bars of *Banaha* as a vocal warm-up. Begin on a comfortable pitch that rises gradually with each repeat, this is a common approach used by most facilitators when warming up. With good leadership this gradual rise can go unnoticed by the singers who to their own surprise find themselves singing freely in a range they may have thought was not achievable.

⁹¹ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher’s Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 64.

2.7.2 Beginning to sing

Having gone through the warm-up steps the class are now ready to begin singing *Banaha*. In bar two take the second phrase ‘Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah’. Use the call-and-response approach to sing the melody while drawing the shape with one hand, or using single fingers with the hand turned sideways for pitches to show the rise and fall of the phrase. To encourage concentrated listening, avoid singing the response with them.

Listen carefully for correct pitch and unified vowels. If any student has problems singing the correct pitch replace text with Tonic Sol-fa and hand signs. When the problem is corrected return to the text. Draw a rainbow to encourage legato singing and get the children to do the same. Repeat the above steps for the new ‘Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah’ melody that begin in bars ten and eighteen.

At this point the singers know the melody of all ‘Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah’ phrases. Using the call-and-response approach, they are now ready to experience a full performance of the *Banaha* in collaboration with the facilitator.

| Teacher - Call | Student - Response |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| See-see, See-see, doh-lah-dah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| See-see, See-see, doh-lah-dah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| Bah-nah-hah, Bah-nah-hah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| Bah-nah-hah, Bah-nah-hah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| Hah, Bah-nah-hah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| Hah, Bah-nah-hah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| See-see, See-see, doh-lah-dah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |
| See-see, See-see, doh-lah-dah, | Yah-koo see-neh-lah-doo bah-nah-hah |

Having listened to the teacher's call many times the singers should now make a good attempt at performing the complete song. When the group can perform *Banaha* in unison with confidence and energy the next step is performing it as a round / canon in two parts. This step must not be taken too soon no matter how excited a facilitator is about moving into part-singing. The group must sing confidently, in tune and in the character and style of the piece before exploring the two-part canon.

Understand that it is most desirable that the younger student have had an extensive unison singing experience before choral ensemble experience is introduced...Exploration of the voice to discover the true singing voice is a prerequisite to ensemble singing.⁹²

When the two-part round is secure and confident the group can progress to singing *Banaha* in three parts. Numbers one, two and three on the score above refer to the entry points for the two or three-part round/canon.

⁹² Haasemann and Jordan, *Group Vocal Technique*

Confident vocal modelling is fundamental to group singing success. Choosing a song one is vocally confident with will guarantee successful pedagogical and learning outcomes. Call-and-response songs require focus and are the easiest to teach⁹³ which is why they are a great place to start to get children singing. Similarly rounds and canons aid listening.⁹⁴ Tonic sol-fa helps children to get to grips with notation in a simple way.⁹⁵ Unison singing is fundamental to successful part-singing.⁹⁶ The more approaches to teaching and learning are include the more effective the facilitation process.⁹⁷ Students will mirror a teacher's energy.⁹⁸ All of the above methods require careful planning and thoughtful teaching.⁹⁹

⁹³ Page, *Music as a way of knowing*, 49.

⁹⁴ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 76.

⁹⁵ W.G. Whittaker, 'The Claims of Tonic Solfa' *Oxford Journals*, 320-321.

⁹⁶ Barbara M. Tagg, 'Barbara M. Tagg', in Melissa M. Mills, (ed.), *Working With Young Singers Educational Philosophies of Expert Children's Choir Conductors* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2017), 17-32.

⁹⁷ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 10.

⁹⁸ Page, *Sing and shine on!: The Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Song Leading*, 64.

⁹⁹ Doreen Rao 'Choral performance as music education', in *Choral Music Experience: Teaching children through choral music experience*, (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. 1991), iv, 5.

Chapter 3: Review of data collected

In January 2017 primary school teachers in the Ballymun area of Dublin, Ireland were informed about a Department of Education approved summer course ‘Let The Children Sing’ taking place in July 2017. Having previously facilitated a small number of workshops with the Ballymun Music Programme some teachers are familiar with the author’s work. The teachers who expressed an interest in attending the summer course were invited to attend two advance teaching demonstration workshops in March and May 2017.

Reflection document feedback from both workshops became the action research tools that informed the overall plan of the summer course towards fulfilling the professional development needs of the teachers. Written feedback from the summer course and follow-up questionnaires further informed the impact of the summer course on their continuing professional development and overall confidence.

Chapter three outlines information collected, how this information was collected and subsequent findings from the two advance workshops. Information and findings from the five-day summer course in July 2017 and the two follow-up questionnaires are also discussed.

3.1 Information collected at workshops

To determine and fulfil the professional development needs of teachers interested in attending the summer course, individual strengths and weaknesses specific to teaching and engaging in group singing with students needed to be identified. Being in possession of this knowledge in advance would serve to indirectly predict expected outcomes and inform methodology and the subsequent design of the summer course.

The information was gathered over two ninety-minute demonstration workshops in March and May 2017. Nine teachers, referred to hereafter as participants, attended the first workshop. Eight written evaluations were received. The same number of participants attended the second workshop. It is important to point out no complete class was present at either workshop as each participant was accompanied by eight to ten students from individual classes.

3.1.1 Workshop one reflection document (Please refer to Appendix 1)

The questions in the first reflection document focus on a teaching demonstration of two relatively simple songs that would inform the author about the participants' level of knowledge on group singing facilitation, and the skills they as individuals needed to begin or develop the facilitation process. The first four steps in the reflection document are inter-related.

1. Under the headings 'Music-Related', 'Non-Music-Related' and 'Other', participants were asked to list key standout workshop elements. Use of the word 'elements' kept it broad for teachers to offer as many observations and as much

information as possible. All participants list the holistic use of rhythm as part of the teaching process. Breathing techniques, use of gesture, body percussion and simple teaching strategies such as call-and-response. Use of dynamics and diction are also mentioned. Incorporating an element of fun into the demonstration is also referred to as well as making the children responsible for their learning through questions and feedback. (Please refer to Appendix 5, tables 5.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3)

2. From the elements listed under each heading participants were then invited to circle those currently used in the classroom. Some of the rhythm-related elements from number one above are listed, as are breathing techniques and the simple teaching strategies. Also listed is use of two-part singing and call-and-response. Two participants did not circle any elements, which concludes they did not complete the request or are not confident using the elements initially listed. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.2)

3. Including the circled elements from number two above, participants were invited to underline all elements they currently felt confident employing, and would be confident employing in the future. Five participants list rhythm-related elements. Two list breathing exercises. Gesture, actions and simple teaching strategies previously mentioned are also listed. Two-part singing and call-and-response did not appear on the list which concludes that this is an area some participants are not confident employing. The same two participants from number two above did not underline any elements, which once again concludes they did not complete the request or are not confident using the elements initially listed. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.3)

4. After completing steps one two and three, the elements left not circled or underlined represent the elements participants are ‘least confident or not at all confident with’. The open style questioning resulted in some non-confident-related elements being listed, however every answer is documented. Among those mentioned under each heading are rhythm-related techniques including body percussion, breathing exercises and the words major and minor are also listed. Various teaching strategies listed include correcting wrong notes and using body gestures and actions. Incorporating fun and feedback from the children also feature. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2)

5. Participants were invited to list what they felt they needed as individuals to employ the remaining list of ‘least confident or not at all confident’ elements in the classroom. Rhythm featured once again. Repertoire is listed twice. Simple reminders of what can be done musically with simple songs, step-by-step building of a song, time for lesson planning, techniques for showing the direction of the music and fun warm-ups are also listed. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.5)

5a. Participants who currently incorporate singing into their teaching were asked to give examples of how they do this. Among those listed are, teaching songs for confirmation, folk songs, songs for St. Patricks Day, songs connected to history, songs in the Irish language and traditional and modern pop songs. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.5.1)

5b. Under multiple-choice headings ‘Hourly’, ‘Daily’, ‘Weekly’, ‘Monthly’, ‘Yearly’, and ‘Special Occasions’ participants were asked how frequently they

incorporate singing into their teaching. Answers varied from daily to weekly and monthly. Special occasions and random days are also listed. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.5.2)

The findings provided from 5a and 5b above, informed the practical musical experience and active musical engagement of each of the participants.

6. The participants were asked what would help motivate them to continue or begin to engage more in facilitating group singing in the classroom. This question provided participants with a platform on which to express how they felt the impending summer course would benefit them individually, and highlight areas according to them that needed to be developed. Four participants refer to repertoire: having a bank of songs, recordings and easy songs with harmony. Incorporating rhythm into the teaching of new songs, fun, and having more time in the day to sing are also listed. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.6)

7. Participants were given the option to document any further comments. Two comments are documented: one participant refers to their enjoyment of learning songs and what to do with them, another participant enjoys observing the demonstrations. (Please refer to Appendix 5 table 5.7)

3.1.2 Workshop two reflection document (See Appendix 6)

The aim of the second reflection document was to refine the content and context for the summer course by finding out if participants engaged in teaching their class one or both songs from the first demonstration workshop, and if so to document the

experience. As the reflection document for this workshop sought to measure progress from the first workshop, only five participants could complete the forms.

The reflection document comprised a mix of six open and multiple-choice questions. As all questions were specific to the teaching of the two songs from the first workshop, questions three, four, five and six could only be answered by participants who taught one or both songs. Question seven offered all participants an opportunity for further comments.

1. Participants were asked if they had taught one or both songs. Four choices ‘Yes’, ‘No’, ‘Duck Dance’, ‘Zulu Warrior’ were offered. Participants were instructed to circle the relevant answers. This question informed how many of the participants were pro-active in teaching one or both songs. From the five completed answers three participants taught Zulu Warrior. Two did not teach either song. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.1)

2. The first part of question two is for participants who answered ‘yes’ to question one. Under three options ‘Immediately’, ‘Following week’, ‘After Easter holidays’ participants were asked how soon after the workshop they taught the songs, and were instructed to circle the relevant answer. The first part of the question helped gauge the impact the first workshop had on participants. The aim was to give a clear picture of those who had been motivated by the workshop in giving them the confidence needed to teach one or both songs. One participant taught the song the following week and two taught it after Easter. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.2)

The second part of question two is for those did not teach the song. They were asked what prevented them from teaching the songs and were given four options: 'Time', 'Skill', 'Confidence', and 'Other' and instructed to circle the relevant answer. The answers helped inform whether lack of skills or confidence or a combination of both played a part in preventing participants from teaching the songs. It also provided important information with regard to the everyday obstacles that prevents teachers getting things done in their classroom. Time spent on First Communion and Confirmation as well as having a student on teaching practice in the classroom are the reasons cited. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.2.1)

3. Participants who taught one or both songs were asked what challenges if any they encountered. This helped inform the individual challenges participants had while also learning more about their individual needs to inform content and context for the summer course. Challenges listed are problems with rhythm and having enough time for teaching. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.3)

4. Participants who taught one or both songs were asked if they had invited the children who attended the first workshop with them to take leadership roles in helping them teach the songs, they were invited to elaborate on their answer. Three answered yes. They had the children model techniques. One answered no. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.4)

5. Participants were asked if they were pleased with the overall outcome. This provided an opportunity for participants to think about the teaching of the song with regard to critical self-reflection. All answered yes and refer to being able to do Zulu

Warrior as a round as well the positive reaction and enjoyment from the children.

(Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.5)

6. The final question asked if participants had experienced any unexpected musical or personal outcomes while teaching the song. Participants were also given the opportunity to offer additional comments. An appreciation of working on rhythm related to the song and working on it independently, the children's enjoyment and how easy it is for them to remember the song were listed. One participant who had not taught either song said they fully intended to teach both songs, and one mentioned the positive comments that children brought back to the class resulting in other children asking to attend the next time. (Please refer to Appendix 6 table 6.6)

3.2 Information collected at the summer course

‘Let The Children Sing’ summer course took place from Monday July 3 to Friday July 7, 2017 from 10am to 2.30pm. Each day was divided into four sessions, 10am to 11am, 11am to 12 noon, 12.30pm to 1.15pm and 1.15pm to 2.30pm. Day one was an introductory day with the author and course participants. A small group of children attended as choir-in-residence on day two, three, four and five for the 11am and 12.30pm sessions.

3.2.1 Post-its key learning moments (Please refer to Appendix 7)

The final scheduled session each day from 1.15pm to 2.30pm was designated for reflection and evaluation towards creating a list of learned outcomes that would also serve as pedagogical tools. All participants were given post-its and invited to write down key learning moments and other standout elements. Using post-its allowed for a visual of the various observations to be created on a wall to be openly available for participants to see. The post-its were left in place to allow participants time to document them. Having them on display also inspired further discussion as well as serving as reminders. The data collected from the post-its was divided in the following element-related headings: Monday’s reflection, repertoire, gesture, pedagogy, listening, intonation, literacy, musicianship, *Banaha*: post-its relating to the teaching demonstration given to participants on day three, favourite activity or song and key learning moments. Most comments are related to the active and engaging teaching and learning process. Various rhythm-related elements connected to the songs being taught are highlighted. Using analogies as effective teaching strategies are also mentioned. The step-by-step learning approach, body gestures and actions and use of Tonic Sol-fa are also highlighted.

3.2.2 Daily critical reflections (Please refer to Appendix 8)

Daily critical reflection through transcribing each session as it happened played an important part in helping participants document key standout teaching and learning outcomes. The author took responsibility for this on day one. A teaching colleague of the author attended on day two, three four and five to take over the critical reflection role of documenting each session as it unfolded. She also taught some warm-ups and nonsense songs each day. As the children's choir-in-residence were in attendance from day two it proved invaluable to the author to have this extra support. On subsequent days, time was allocated to discuss the reflections. Each participant was given a copy of the daily reflections.

Each day is documented separately in the appendix. An example taken from day two of how the critical reflections were transcribed:

Action: Stamp/clap rhythm. How did Mary solve the problem of the stamping and clapping together? The children could clap and stamp, but when put together, some were doing both at the same time. Observation: Mary modeled the correct stamp and clap action and explained that when stamping the children were to gesture hands outwards to avoid the clap occurring at the same time as the stamp. The children immediately modeled the action correctly. This format was retained for day three, four and five.

3.2.3 *Banaha* group assignment (Please refer to Appendix 9)

Day one introduced the participants to the author's planned repertoire for working on with the children the following day. On day three participants were given an assignment aimed to consolidate methodologies experienced in day one and two as

well as reflecting on what was learned. Participants were handed a notated score of *Banaha*. Seated in a circle they were invited to take a few minutes individually to look at score with a view to teaching it. They were encouraged to make notes of their observations and ideas and were then divided into groups to discuss and document their combined ideas for teaching the piece. Tonic sol-fa, rhythm-related teaching techniques, analogies, actions, gestures and simple strategies that participants had experienced over the first two days all feature in the group responses. When the children arrived participants observed the author teaching *Banaha* to the children. They were encouraged to compare observations in relation to the written ideas proposed as part of the earlier assignment.

3.2.4 Children's choir-in-residence evaluation (Please refer to Appendix 10)

On day two, three, four and five of the summer course approximately fifteen children attended as part of the choir-in-residence. On the final day the children were given a blank sheet of paper and were invited to write down some things about their overall experience. Many of the children say they loved being the teacher: a role given to them at the outset about which the author often reminded them. They also refer to teaching techniques such as shaping lips for vowels, the great experience they had, the fun, and how they like the new songs, the friends they made and the nice teachers they met. Two said they would like to do it again.

3.2.5 'Let the Children Sing' summer course participant evaluation (Please refer to Appendix 11)

Nineteen participants attended all five days of the summer course in July 2017. All participants were female. Two course evaluations were completed on the final day

of the course. One was a generic official Department of Education and Skills evaluation form. ‘Let the Children Sing’ course evaluation was designed by the author and teaching colleague with responsibility for daily critical reflection. This evaluation was designed around the daily workshop sessions and critical reflection discussions. It included two content-related questions on key learning methods and tools as well as the advantages or disadvantages of the presence of a choir-in-residence.

Key learning methods and tools listed included using rhythm directly related to the song in the teaching and learning process; the effective use of simple life-related methods used in the teaching; helping children to find their head voice; use of tonic sol-fa; the effective use of gesture, and breaking down a song into manageable sections for teaching and learning. Overall methods are referred to as being very practical and relevant throughout the course. One participant says all key learning moments for them happened while observing the author work with the children.

The main advantage of having the children’s choir is being able to see the results when working on simple strategies; observing the children taking responsibility for their learning and when they might begin to lose focus; watching and hearing them progress and improve, as well as getting regular feedback from them. One participant in relation to loss of concentration wondered if the two sessions were too much for them.

The four outcome-related questions are related to teacher confidence, resulting mindsets on singing in schools, benefits to participant’s schools from their

attendance on the course, and if participants would like to keep in touch with each other after the course. An option for further comments is also given. The open style of questioning resulted in detailed answers from all participants.

All participants say their confidence in relation to singing is improved especially in relation to using the simple strategies; having a bank of songs and exercises impacted positively on this increase in confidence. One participant is inspired to use more challenging repertoire while another mentions the importance of simplicity and quality operating simultaneously as part of the teaching process. One participant feels their knowledge is below that of others.

It is clear that singing in the classroom is very important to all participants who now look forward to implementing new ideas into their teaching. One participant mentions that singing is the only subject that is completely cross-curricular. Others recognise the value of singing as part a child's day in relation to belonging and equality regardless of academic capabilities and that for some, it is their moment to shine.

Every participant believes their school will benefit from their attendance at the summer course as they bring back new ideas to share with teaching colleagues. Some say that while they believe their school will benefit, what is really needed is an in-service for the whole school; teachers tend to place themselves into categories of who can and can't teach singing.

All participants are interested in keeping in touch with each other to share ideas and a group Facebook page is mentioned as an option. Further comments include watching the author interact with the children, using and developing the head voice, a wish to attend the course again, the value of having the children's choir, a suggestion to set up a teacher's choir and the value of having the songs recorded in future courses. One participant feels they could not recommend the course to teaching colleagues because they would be overwhelmed by the vast content and as a result feel they can't sing. The same participant says if the Creative Ireland strategy is to work, it is these teachers that need to be targeted for their own professional development so they can pass it on in their classroom.

3.2.5.1 Official Department of Education and Skills Evaluation (Please refer to Appendix 12)

Nineteen participants completed the official evaluation form on the final day of the summer course. Two participants could only attend for three days and were not present for the final evaluation. Seventeen were primary school teachers and two were neither Primary or Post-Primary teachers. All answers are placed under the headings, 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

Sixteen strongly agree and three agree they achieved the expected learning outcomes. All nineteen agree the course was professionally enabling and relevant to the work of schools. Sixteen strongly agree and three agree the course improved their teaching or leadership skills. All strongly agree the tutor's ability to lead the learning and the approach to learning ensured participants' engagement. Fourteen strongly agree and four agree that the tutor provided appropriate feedback on assignments and activities.

Eleven strongly agree and eight agree the course was linked meaningfully to school self-evaluation and information and communications technology. All participants strongly agree it was a good quality course.

Further suggestions to improve the quality of the course mostly included appreciation for the quality-led course and its content that was relevant to all levels of primary school whether it be classroom singing or school choir. One participant says the success of the course is down to the skills of the tutor and the children's choir-in-residence. One mentions that further professional development support for teachers is needed and all teachers need similar training as to that offered on the course.

3.3 Information collected from follow-up reflection documents

As seventeen of the nineteen summer course evaluations were anonymous, new numbers are assigned for the first reflection document and remain the same for reflection document two.

3.3.1 Follow-up reflection document one (Please see appendix 13)

The first follow-up reflection document was emailed to all summer course participants four months after the summer course and included four questions. Ten participants from a possible nineteen completed the first follow-up reflection document. One of the ten is a visiting teacher and one is a facilitator outside school hours in a primary school. Participants were asked to elaborate as much or as little as they felt necessary. This questionnaire sought to find out how often participants use singing in the classroom, they level of confidence since the course and if they had used any of the techniques on the course when teaching new songs.

Regarding the frequency of engaging in singing in the classroom this varied from once, twice, three times and every day. When asked did they feel more confident, all participants reply yes. One elaborated on their answer saying that rather than being more confident they feel their teaching of singing is improved. One participant says trial and error in teaching and learning a song is ok, it is ok if it is not perfect; just go for it. When asked why they felt this way, answers included the skills and repertoire taught on the course, meeting other teachers and hearing their stories, and observing the author work with the children. One participant says they would like more magic tricks.

Participants were asked if they had explored new repertoire using the new techniques. All replied yes and mentioned the repertoire and resources used. One participant says that some of the repertoire used on the course was more advanced than what they would normally use in class. The same participant then discovered some of the advanced songs worked out quite well for them. As a result they have been challenged to do more advance songs.

As Christmas is an ideal time to so more singing in the classroom participants were given one final task. They were invited to explore singing resources in their school or resources purchased since the summer course, and choose one song to teach and lead for a classroom performance before Christmas. The findings of this task are outlined in 3.3.2 below. Participants were also asked if they would like to re-group in January or February 2018 and all said yes. The proposed meeting would take the format of an informal get-together to sing and reflecting on their journey. Most participants replied yes.

3.3.2 Follow-up reflection document No.2 (See Appendix 14)

An informal get-together was arranged for 18 February 2018. Five participants from the summer course attended. The reflection document was forwarded by email to remaining participants who were unable to attend. Twelve participants completed the questionnaire. Those who completed the task of teaching a song for a performance in December were asked to elaborate on the experience in the context of key learning moments of the summer course, challenges encountered if any, and their overall sense of confidence since the summer course. The final question asked

participants what direction they would like to see the summer course take if it was to be repeated in July 2018, and what techniques if any they would like to explore.

On paper, ten participants said they completed the task however the answers following on from this question revealed that all twelve completed the task. All participants elaborated on what their task involved. Findings revealed the task was a success story for all participants; the sense of achievement of both participants and their singers comes across clearly in the reading of the answers. (Please refer to Appendix 14, table 14.2) Some refer to the children's confidence on stage, and how satisfying it was to see the simple strategies working for them. Some mention challenges encountered such as working with a very large choir, not having enough time with accompanists to rehearse and how this impacted in a negative way on the performance especially on vocal entries. One participant mentioned positive comments about the singers from the principal and chairperson. One participant entered a competition with the piece they had performed saying they would not have had the confidence to do this before the summer course. Questions on confidence and teaching techniques were addressed in relation to increased confidence and more singing in the classroom resulting from new techniques learned; all those who answered say yes their confidence has increased as a result of taking part in the summer course. One participant said they would not have taught choir before taking the course. Many say the new skills and techniques helped build their confidence and one says their increase in confidence came from knowing the song before teaching. One participant is now able to tackle the words of a song in the rhythm of the song, another says that while they still facilitate singing the same amount as before they believe they do a better job. The value of short accessible songs is

highlighted in relation to building confidence in the children. One participant who before was inclined to shy away from songs in different languages or songs with challenging rhythms no longer does that after experiencing how quickly the singers picked up these songs in the summer course. They are also happy to know a non-formal approach to conducting is acceptable.

The combined data from March 2017 to February 2018 informed the potential future professional development needs of teachers in Ireland to begin to engage in group singing towards active music-making in the classroom.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

I feel I don't need to be a "pro" to teach music. Simple effective ideas that are child friendly have become a toolkit for me and they really engage the children.¹⁰⁰

Singing was compulsory in primary schools in Ireland in 1952; 'non-singers' a term still in use today, were practically non-existent; most parts of Ireland boasted fairly good sight-reading skills; sixty-six years later this is no longer the case.

Recommendations outlined in the 1952 *Music in Ireland* report in chapter one have yet to be addressed: music education to be given a higher place on the curriculum and singing to be compulsory in secondary school, as it was in primary school.

Thirty-three years on from *Deaf Ears?* a large percentage of primary school children still find themselves in schools with teachers who through no fault of their own do not have the skills to teach music. Nineteen years on from the *Forum for Music in Ireland's* submission to the minister for education, thousands of children are still leaving primary school with little or no music education experience.

A much-needed outcome from Music Network's 2003 report *A National System of Local Music Education Services Report of a Feasibility Study* is the establishment of Music Generation's Partnership programme in 2011. Ten years on from *Raising Your Voice* choral activity within formal education still needs prioritising; the 2017 initiative '*It's the taking part that counts*' to get Ireland's schools singing will begin to address this. Specialists to support this development will however, need to remain a priority. In 2017 *Sing Yourself Better* became the first Irish report to research and

¹⁰⁰ Participant eleven, *Follow-up questionnaire two*, appendix 14.

document the health and well-being benefits of choral singing with adults, similar benefits for children and young people are outlined in chapter one.

Sixteen years ago one of the recommendations cited in the *Music Education National Debate*, was that music education needs a solid foundation system aligned contextually with Ireland's needs. The inclusion of individual and collective professional development needs of teachers in Ireland is the key to aligning and solidifying this system. This contextual foundation system is needed now more than ever. Why?

Based on the Irish context, a foundation system is needed to support a growing population of potential facilitators with a passion for music education. Through quality-led on-going professional development these facilitators can then begin to implement many of the recommendations made in the name of music education in Ireland over the last sixty-six years. As well as the potential personal, social, health, well-being and educational benefits outlined in chapter one, a foundation system is required to get Ireland's schools singing as part of '*It's the taking part that counts*'. Most importantly however, a foundation system is needed if *Creative Ireland's* goal of providing access to and participation in music education to every child and young person in Ireland by 2022 is to be achieved.

4.1 Determining and fulfilling professional development needs

Given the critical need for more engagement with professional development of teachers as outlined above and in the literature discussed in chapter one, two main actions in this case study were identified and realised. The first was to determine

teachers' needs and the second to provide for these needs through a summer course. Two advance workshops ahead of 'Let The Children Sing' in July 2017 provided the avenue for determining these needs and subsequent design of the summer course towards fulfilling these needs.

It was evident from the written responses after the first teaching demonstration of two relatively simple and short songs that all teachers understood and recognised the teaching elements presented. They readily identified and documented elements that determined the success of the demonstration and, had the musical language to articulate them.

After the final analysis of the listed elements the teachers identified the skills and resources they as individuals needed to begin to put their 'least confident or not confident at all' elements into action in the classroom. Despite being able to articulate their musical knowledge in writing, it was evident 'through no fault of their own' (these words are also used in the 1985 report *Deaf Ears?* discussed in chapter one), that every teacher in some way lacked the know-how to implement some of the most basic music elements.

The overall findings from the workshops resulted in basic elements and skills being prioritised in the outline of the summer course. These elements and skills were designed to enhance the learning outcomes participants would experience over the course of the five days of 'Let the Children Sing'. Simplicity coupled with a holistic approach in all areas of the design was the key to begin empowering the teachers to transform theoretical knowledge into active music making.

4.1 Utilising simple strategies towards best practice

The comprehensive summer course evaluations (Please refer to Appendix 11) reveal the appreciation many participants have for the ‘simple and highly effective’ teaching strategies learned. These strategies determined the quality and success of a fun-led teaching process that keeps children musically engaged and focussed at all times.

Many participants articulated their delight in discovering the musical value that one simple song can offer in relation to addressing various musical elements as part of the teaching process:

‘the value of short accessible songs being taught before tackling more challenging melodies’

‘being able to build on songs and having a whole so quickly’

‘knowing that I can break a piece into manageable chunks and I can start anywhere in the piece’.

One example of these step-by-step stages of learning is isolating a rhythm from one or two bars of a song and turning it into a stamp/clap action as part of a warm-up.

Unknown to the students the intention behind this approach to rhythm is having it in the body and in the mind before teaching the song: moving from the known to the unknown approach to teaching.

Many express that most or all of the key learning moments experienced occurred as they observed the author work with the children’s choir-in-residence; ‘it was real raw learning, not artificial trying to imagine how it might go. Real teaching and thinking on your feet’. One participant says ‘watching Mary interact with the children was

wonderful. We could immediately see the results of her actions, tricks to get better singing etc. We could also see how much the children enjoyed singing and how quickly they could learn’.

Some participants express surprise at how the children love the nonsense songs and songs in different languages used in the course. One participant writes ‘teachers are limiting children’s experience because the teacher thinks the child won’t be able when asked’. Another says that as a result of the course they are inspired to use more challenging repertoire while two other participants mention ‘not to shy away from difficult songs’ and ‘just get started! Stand up in front of your choir and sing’, as key learning actions they took with them from the course.

Use of life-related teaching strategies mentioned in chapter one becomes a key learning moment for most participants. Examples of these are simulating the sound an owl makes and mimicking a siren to help children pitch and reach ‘high’ notes; in effect getting the children to experience their head-voice and what it feels like to sing in head-voice. A similar strategy is using the arm to draw a rainbow for singing legato. In the words of one participant ‘as a teacher with limited singing ability, I’ve really been impressed with the teaching styles taught. It made reaching those high notes more accessible. Now, I feel more confident about not only reaching those notes myself but, helping my students to get there too’.

Ten out of eleven participants say they feel more confident, the other participant already having the confidence from on-going singing experiences. In the final follow-up evaluations, one participant says ‘yes my confidence has increased. I realise starting something is better than waiting for perfection’. Another says ‘I

wouldn't necessarily say more confident singing but I think that I am teaching singing in a better way than before'. When asked the reasons behind feeling more confident one participant refers to 'seeing the singing lessons and techniques modelled daily for a week. Because the course was full of active learning I find I can recall most of what we did without having to look back on the notes'. In the same way that children expresses excitement over singing particular songs some participants articulated their excitement around returning to the classroom to incorporate these highly effective strategies into their song teaching.

In February 2018, all participants answered yes when asked do they explore new repertoire using the new techniques learned in the summer course. In addition all respondents currently use singing in the classroom ranging from once, twice, three times as week, to engaging in it on a daily basis.

In relation to a follow-up summer course in 2018 all participants are interested in attending. Some of the comments in relation to a follow-up course are maintaining the format at a similar level, the importance of having the children's choir-in-residence once again and learning new songs suitable for all ages. One participant expresses a wish to engage in a master-class type session teaching the children, getting feedback from the author and having a video recording of the experience to engage in critical self-reflection. This request will be taken into consideration as part of the overall design for 'Let the Children Sing' summer course in July 2018.

To conclude Operation Singing Nation: a case study towards fulfilling the professional development needs of teachers in Ireland to facilitate group singing:

The voice is the most accessible, inclusive and cost-effective musical instrument to provide music education throughout Ireland. It is time to reverse the deeply regretted loss of this essentially primal social activity from our culture as referenced in chapter one 1.2, and take on the wisdom and common sense outlined in chapter one and translate it into common action to *'Let the Children Sing'*.

Children in Ireland spent eight years in primary school. Considering eight years as one generation, eight generations have passed through the Primary School system since *Music in Ireland* was published in 1952. The final year of the ninth generation to complete primary school is 2024. Another generation of primary school children must not be allowed to pass through a system devoid of meaningful, life-enhancing music-making experiences.

Sixty-six years on from *Music in Ireland*, the overall findings of the workshops, the summer course and follow-up reflection documents reveal a genuine hunger for learning towards becoming an effective music education facilitator through using one of the most natural forms of musical expression, the voice.

'It used to be an integral part of schooling – when did it disappear? How, now do we revive singing at school?...One teacher at a time! Simple, relevant songs'.¹⁰¹

Empowering teachers to facilitate group singing in the classroom will guarantee access to and participation in music education to every child and young person in Ireland. The informed methodology implemented in the 'Let the Children Sing' summer course served to empower a relatively small group of teachers to facilitate

¹⁰¹ Participant nineteen *'Let the Children Sing'* summer course evaluation, appendix 11.

group singing in their classroom. Further provision of needs-based informed courses has guaranteed potential to empower every teacher in Ireland to facilitate group singing, and for singing to once again become an integral part of schooling in Ireland.

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Appendix 1

Workshop one questionnaire

Monday 27th March 2017
12.45 – 2.15pm Ballymun Musicroom

Name: _____

School: _____

1. Under the following headings, make a list of the elements of the workshop that stood out for you today.

Music Related

Non-Music Related

Other

2. From the elements listed above **circle** those you currently use in your classroom.

3. From the elements listed in No. 1 above **underline** those you feel confident employing now and in the future (*include those you circled too – some elements may end up being circled and underlined!*)

4. What do you feel as an individual that **YOU** need in order to be able to use the remaining elements – those not circled or underlined - in your classroom?

5a. If you currently incorporate singing into your teaching please give some examples of how you do this.

5b. How frequently do you do this?

Hourly Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly Special
Occasions

6. What do **YOU** believe would help motivate **YOU** to continue to / begin to / do more singing in the classroom?

Appendix 2

Workshop two questionnaire

Monday 15th May 2017
12.45 – 2.15pm Ballymun Musicroom

Name: _____

School: _____

The first workshop on 27th March 2017 covered the following two pieces from Junior Voiceworks 1 – Duck Dance & The Zulu Warrior.

To help to inform the content and context of *'Let The Children Sing'* Summer Course in July in aspiring to provide a quality learning experience for the teachers involved, please answer the following questions and elaborate if needed.

1. Did you bring one or both of these songs back to your own classroom to teach? Please circle answers below.

YES NO DUCK DANCE ZULU WARRIOR

2. If you answered YES to No. 1 above, how soon after the workshop did you start to teach your class the song(s)? Please Circle

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WEEK AFTER EASTER
HOLIDAYS

2(a). If you answered NO, what stopped you or got in the way?

TIME SKILLS CONFIDENCE OTHER (please elaborate)

3. What challenges if any did you encounter in teaching the song(s)?

4. Did you invite the children in the workshop to help you teach?

YES (*please elaborate on their input*)

NO (*Please elaborate as to why you did not include them*)

5. Were you pleased with the overall outcome?

6. Were there any unexpected outcomes musically or personally?

7. Additional comments if any (optional)

Appendix 3

Summer course follow-up one questionnaire – November 2017

Name _____

Four and a half months have passed since our summer course. I would very much appreciate your time and answers to the following questions. Please answer questions 1 – 4 elaborating as much as you feel is needed where necessary. All answers will be very beneficial to my research as part of my dissertation, which has the importance of singing with children and young people at its core. If you are not a classroom teacher, please answer the questions in relation to your current work with children and young people and mention the nature of your work – community choir, visiting specialist etc.

- 1. How often do you use singing in the classroom?**
- 2. Do you feel more confident in singing in the classroom?**
- 3. What has encouraged you to feel this way?**
- 4. Have you explored new repertoire using the techniques learnt over the summer course?**

As Christmas is an ideal time of year to do more singing in the classroom I have included one small task. I would like you to explore the singing resources in your school or those you may have purchased since ‘Let The Children Sing’ summer course.

Choose **ONE** song to TEACH and LEAD for a classroom performance before Christmas. It can be an informal performance in your own classroom or be part of a bigger performance in your school. (You may already be working on something for Christmas so if you want to use this you can).

Choose a song that you know you will enjoy teaching while also giving you a bit of a challenge. The level of difficulty is up to you, keep it simple if you like – we all experienced what could be done with a simple song like Duck Dance during the course. It would be very helpful if you would journal your reflections on your teaching and employment of techniques we covered in the summer course (or others you have learnt elsewhere). For example – what worked for you and why? What were you less comfortable with? How could it be refined?

One final matter, would you like to re-group after Christmas? January or February? A Saturday afternoon would suit me as I am in Dublin on Saturday mornings. It would be lovely to see you all again, do some singing together and recap.

Appendix 4

Summer course follow-up two questionnaire – February 2018

Name _____

Final task (November 2017) – TEACH and LEAD ONE song for a formal or non-formal classroom performance before Christmas.

- 1. Did you complete the task? Yes / No (If No please elaborate)**

- 2. If you answered yes to No. 1 describe what it was you did for the performance. Please elaborate where possible on specific or general music or non-music related experiences of the overall facilitation and performance process.**

- 3. Seven months have passed since the summer course. Has your confidence in relation to facilitating group singing increased as a result of participating in the course? Yes / No (Please elaborate)**

- 4. Have the techniques demonstrated during the workshops and/or summer course empowered you more to facilitate group singing? (Please elaborate)**

- 5. Moving forward what shape or direction would you like to see the summer course take if it is to take place again in 2018? Are there particular challenges or techniques you would like to explore that you would benefit from?**

Appendix 5

Workshop one participant responses

Numbers one to eight in the tables on the following page refer to participant number one, number two, three etc. Participant nine left the first workshop early hence the numbers one to eight. Unanswered questions are marked NA, not answered.

Table 5.1: ‘Music-Related’ elements identified by participants one to eight

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Relating clapping rhythm to written notation | Breathing exercises | Rhythm from bars in song | Rhythm exercises with actions | Rhythm clapping | Clapping rhythm | Using fingers to show movement of notes | Breathing techniques |
| Moving from Rhythm to notation to lyrics – Duck Dance | Rhythm clapping and echoing in Duck Dance | Pitched relatively high – I try (<i>‘I try’ added when circling elements currently using</i>) | Because of approach Children had the rhythm very quickly | Echoing with foot stamps | Reading music as claps | Actions to accompany part of songs | Using words ‘stay there’ for repeated pitch |
| Dynamics and diction | Clapped rhythms in notation in Duck Dance | Body percussion to aid rhythm – I will try (<i>‘I will try’ added when underlining confident elements</i>) | | Pointy finger at the note | Linking music then lyrics | Dynamics | Gestures to help hold a long note |
| Body percussion including dynamics | Duck Dance taught line by line | | | | Notes | Teaching rhythm first then melody | Singing songs silently for diction |
| Major / minor | Body Percussion | | | | Having two groups singing two parts (Trying this more recently) | Major and minor | Clapping rhythm whilst singing |
| Two-part Singing ‘call and response’ and round | Correcting wrong notes | | | | | | |
| | Zulu taught line by line and done in a round | | | | | | |
| | Child conducting the group | | | | | | |

Table 5.1.2: ‘Non-Music-Related’ elements identified by participants one to eight

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Breathing | Breathing exercise | Fun | Breathing exercises | Core-tightening stomach muscles | Breathing exercises | Sing first – give out music after | Always complimenting the students efforts |
| Posture – (Shoulders in breathing) | | Different | | | Pronounce words and sounds | Choosing short songs with a focus on rhythm/ melody/ dynamic. | |
| | | Not hard to learn | | | | | |

Table 5.1.3: ‘Other’ elements identified by participants one to eight

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----|----|----|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NA | NA | NA | Great fun! | Breathing techniques – pace it out | Asking the children to self-direct – “What could we do better”? | Children identify their own mistakes – wrong pitch | Standing / sitting |
| | | | | Self praise (shoulder pat) | Bettering teacher from asking children what they like to sing | Encouraging individual responsibility | Getting children to tap the foot of their partner if they think they made a mistake |
| | | | | | | Children’s feedback | |

Table 5.2: Elements currently used in the classroom

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Dynamics and diction | Rhythm clapping and echoing | Rhythm from bars in song | *NA | Core-tightening stomach muscles | Clapping rhythm | Dynamics | *NA |
| Body percussion including dynamics | Clapped rhythms in notation | Pitched relatively high – (<i>I try</i>) | | Breathing techniques – pace it out | Having two groups singing two parts | Sing first – give out music after | |
| Two-part Singing ‘call and response’ and round | Duck Dance taught line by line | | | | Breathing exercises | Children identify their own mistakes – wrong pitch | |
| | | | | | Pronounce words and sounds | | |

* It is possible that participant four and eight did not complete this instruction.

Table 5.3: Elements participants feel confident employing now and in the future

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| Relating clapping rhythm to written notation | Breathing exercises | Rhythm from bars in song | *NA | Rhythm clapping | Clapping rhythm | Actions to accompany part of songs | *NA |
| Moving from Rhythm to notation to lyrics | Rhythm clapping and echoing | Pitched relatively high – (I try) | | Echoing with foot stamps | Reading music as claps | Dynamics | |
| Breathing | Clapped rhythms in notation | Body percussion to aid rhythm – (I will try) | | | Linking music then lyrics | Sing first – give out music after | |
| | Duck Dance taught line by line | | | | | | |
| | Zulu taught line by line and done in a round | | | | | | |

* No elements in participant four and eight's reflection document were circled or underlined which concludes one of two things; they did not complete instruction number two and three, or they do not currently and are not confident employing all elements initially identified and listed.

Table 5.4: 'Music-Related' least confident or not at all confident

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Major / minor | Body Percussion | *NA | Rhythm exercises with actions | Pointy finger at the note | Notes | Using fingers to show movement of notes | Breathing techniques |
| | Correcting wrong notes | | Because of approach children had the rhythm very quickly | | | Teaching rhythm first then melody | Using words 'stay there' for repeated pitch |
| | Child conducting the group | | | | | Major and minor | Gestures to help hold a long note |
| | | | | | | | Singing songs silently for diction |
| | | | | | | | Clapping rhythm whilst singing |

* This concludes that participant three did not complete the instruction or is confident in using all 'music-related' elements they initially identified and listed in 5.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3 above.

Table 5.4.1: ‘Non-Music-Related’ least confident or not at all confident

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Posture – (Shoulders in breathing) | Breathing exercises | Fun | Breathing exercises | Pointy finger at the note | *NA | Choosing short songs with a focus on rhythm/ melody/ dynamic. | Always complimenting the students efforts |
| | | Different | | | | | |
| | | Not hard to learn | | | | | |

*The above findings conclude participant six is confident using all ‘non-music-related’ elements initially identified and listed in table one above.

Table 5.4.2: ‘Other’ least confident or not at all confident

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-----|-----|-----|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| *NA | *NA | *NA | Great fun! | Self praise (shoulder pat | Asking the children to self-direct – “What could we do better?” | Encouraging individual responsibility | Standing / sitting |
| | | | | | Bettering teacher from asking children what they like to sing | Children’s feedback | Getting children to tap the foot of their partner if they think they made a mistake |

* Participants one, two and three did not list any ‘other’ key workshop elements in table three above.

Table 5.5: List of tools and skills to empower participants to employ their identified music-related, non-music related and other ‘least confident or not at all confident’ elements.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| A repertoire of music for singing | Reminders of what can be done musically with simple songs | Actual rhythm learning | *NA | Put more time in planning a session and let go of fear! | Being able to build on songs and having a whole so quickly | Repertoire of appropriate songs | A keyboard |
| | | Practice picking out suitable bars for use as rhythm | | | Knowing notes | Techniques for showing the movement of the music | |
| | | | | | | Fun warm-ups | |

* Participant four did not circle or underline any elements initially identified and listed hence no skills or tools listed in the above table.

Table 5.5.1: How participants incorporate singing into their teaching

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NA | Folk songs, songs for plays, songs as Gaelige, Carols, Songs for Sacraments | Choir for confirmation, St. Patrick’s Day, nonsense songs for April | Choir work for confirmation | Chewing gum exercises | Lesson transition | Singing in Irish, singing songs associated with historical periods – 1916, WW1 songs | Traditional or modern pop song, use of YouTube ‘Songs and lyrics!’ |

Table 5.5.2: How frequently participants incorporate singing in to their teaching

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|---------|-----------------------------|
| NA | Weekly and special occasions | Every six weeks, special occasions and random days | Weekly | Weekly | Daily | Monthly | Weekly Tin Whistle (Daily). |

The information provided in tables ten and table eleven above informed the practical musical experience and active musical engagement of each of the participants.

Table 5.6: Helpful ideas to maintain or develop motivation for classroom singing

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| A repertoire of music for singing | A wider repertoire maybe... | Learning a bank of songs to use? | Having good resources- especially good recordings of songs. | The joy it brings to the classroom | Interest from the children. Teaching new songs based on rhythm | Bigger repertoire. Seeing someone use new techniques first. Nice easy songs with harmonies. | More time in my day. Music time goes so quickly. |

Table 5.7: Additional comments (Optional)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----------------------------|----|
| NA | I like learning new songs at these workshops and what to do with them | NA | NA | NA | NA | Really enjoyable to watch! | NA |

Appendix 6

Workshop two participant responses

Table 6.1: Did you teach one or both songs in your classroom? Yes/No

| 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 |
|----|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| No | Sadly, No | Yes – Zulu Warrior | Yes – Zulu Warrior | Yes – Zulu Warrior |

Table 6.2: How soon after the workshop did you teach the song(s)?

| 4 | 6 | 9 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| After Easter holidays – got two books during Easter. (The two books refer to Junior Voiceworks 1 and 2 that teachers were encouraged to get). | Following week. | After Easter holidays |

Table 6.2.1: What prevented you from teaching the song(s)?

| 2 | 3 | 9 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Other – Confirmation preparation and a student teacher in my class. | Other – I had confirmation choir to do, and had no further access to the boys!! (I am in learning support). I would need to have regular choir time – which will be arranged for this term. | Student on teaching practice. Practice for First Holy Communion choir. <i>(This participant had answered yes in part one – they had taught Zulu Warrior, the answer above is likely to be the reason they didn't get to teach Duck Dance).</i> |

Table 6.3: What challenges if any did you encounter in teaching the song(s)?

| 4 | 6 | 9 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Firstly following your superb session! Getting the rhythm of bar 1 and 3 (Zulu Warrior) and getting the octave change in bar 9. | Time – I did it over a few lessons. It might be preferable to try it over a longer period and to spend longer. | NA |

Table 6.4: Did you invite the children in the workshop to help you teach?

Yes / No (Please elaborate)

| 2 | 4 | 6 | 9 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Yes – these children from a group that sing at the microphone, in church. <i>(This participant had answered NO to the teaching of the two songs in question one above. This answer is likely informing the group helped out during confirmation rehearsal).</i> | Yes – beating the rhythm / breathing exercises / conducting. | No – There are a few children in my class who participated however I tried teaching to the rest of my class to see how much I would remember. | Yes – they modelled it to the rest of the class. |

Table 6.5: Were you pleased with the overall outcome?

| 4 | 6 | 9 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Yes – especially when tried to do a two part round and eventually got it. <i>(Zulu Warrior can be performed as a round)</i> | Yes – there was a very positive reaction and the children really enjoyed it. | Yes. Seeing as they had only heard it one day. |

Table 6.6: Were there any unexpected outcomes musically or personally?

| 4 | 6 | 9 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| An appreciation of working on rhythm independently and with song. | I was surprised at how much the children enjoyed it and how easy it was to remember. | NA |

Table 6.8: Additional comments if any (Optional)

| 2 | 3 | 6 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I fully intend to use both songs with my class during the next few weeks. <i>(This participant had not taught either song to their class)</i> | The children brought very positive comments back to school, and others asked to come next time. | Today's session: I was very impressed at the continuation and how quickly they remembered it. |

Appendix 7

Summer course post-its daily reflections (*Transcribed from individual post-its*)

(The author divided the post-it comments into the following headings when compiling the data)

*Another person wrote the same comment.

Repertoire

What could have been a complex song broken down into simplistic achievable sections

Breaking down songs into parts step by step.

Don't always start the lesson at the beginning of the song!

Winter themed songs

Gestures (relating to sound / feel required)

Paint Pot Idea for long notes *(The children were encourage to imagine they were painting a fence to achieve legato and to make sure long notes were given their full value)*

Dotted minim cross body movement or paintbrush

Hand gestures sol-fa and conductor

Use of gesture / movement to help children (and adults!) with pitch and rhythm

Use of visualising to help correct pitching 'Love Lifted Me' throw the ball on 'love', catch the ball on 'lifted' and push the ball up on 'me'. *(This was a short physical and vocal warm-up song. The pitch on the first note 'love' is high and the pitch on the second note 'lifted' low, 'me' is a longer note, hence the gestures high, low and long).*

Dramatic gestures lift the quality of the music.

Pedagogy

Words to rhythm *(The author isolated a one or two bar rhythm from a song and used it as a stamp/clap warm-up)*

Rhythm stamp & Clap Ya-ku-si-ne-la-du (Banana)

Call and response * *(The author used call-and-response when teaching a new song)*

Hand signals fully engage all singers *(The author used sol-fa hand signs)*

Hand movements for sol-fa on body kinaesthetic learning

Sandwich analogy - your part needs to be thicker (*A three-part canon or round or singing in three parts – the middle part can sometimes get lost in the middle of the top and lower parts – the author used the analogy of a ham sandwich telling them the ham must be the same thickness as the slice of bread on either side*).

Visual aid with sol-fa signs to help show children melody and skipped notes

Sing call and response in different voices (*Exploring high and low, loud and soft, spoken and whispered, happy and sad etc.*).

Chanting *

Beat with your feet/rhythm with your hands * (*A useful chant to differentiate beat and rhythm. The group used left right foot stamps, keeping the beat as they for 'Beat in you feet' and then clapped the rhythm of 'rhythm in your hands'*).

Use drums for different parts (*Imaginary drum-sticks in hand to bring percussiveness into the text as it is sung*)

Using rhythm sticks for accents (*Similar to drum-sticks above*)

Sing and children fill in the blanks (*To encourage greater focus and to get the children to recall the I sang a phrase and deliberately left out a word and gestured to the children to fill it in*)

Sing scale, remove notes time after time – to help with jump F sharp to D.

Reviewing rhythms: picking out the correct notes for rhythm learnt

Recognise 'm r d' in song when listening (*Author's note – this was more than likely 'I'm gonna sing' but could refer to any other song with mi, re, do*)

Echo clapping / singing to sol-fa

1. Start with 'beat in the feet rhythm in the hands' chant – half group do beat and half do rhythm
2. Chanting words – different pitch/pace
3. Hula hoop / sol-fa ladder
4. Introduce phrase from song & rhythm of it – repeat / model
5. Introduce sol-fa signals and words

Positive engagement (& how to get it)

Warm-up – physical and vocal

Simple ways to help a child with rhythm, Mary suggested using a silent gesture to avoid clapping on the wrong beat. (*In an effort to get the children clapping on 2nd and 4th beats of the bar the children the author asked the children to make a gesture for the silent 1st and 3rd beats so the silent beats could be felt*)

Getting children to listen to us singing with / without good technique. Great idea – helps them to understand why they are doing what they're doing.

How dynamics can be enhanced with movement.

How to enhance performance with chimes. Great tip to follow piano line!

Realising that I can break a piece up into manageable parts and that there are more ways of doing the same piece.

Listening

Walk and find your singing partner *(The author had the singers walk around the room singing their part and every time they heard someone else singing the same part they were to stay with them)*

Stop and hold note when teacher gestures. Are they looking and listening. *(For greater focus from the children when the teacher is conducting)*

Pick out familiar patterns

Sing if your birthday is Jan/Feb etc. or if you have blue eyes etc. To hear small groups without singling them out – great idea.

The importance of listening and connecting through music to get the best sound. Singing in circle to In the Bleak Mid Winter.

Intonation

Shaping lips

Hold note and look around make eye contact to correct pitch

Literacy

Helpful for reading notes

Musicality

Which syllable is stronger

Banaha (Song)

Starting with the 2nd section as it starts with d, r, m.
Teach 'si-ne-la-du-ba-na-ha' then add on Ya-Ku.
Have one group stamp beat, another clap rhythm
(above three things were written on one post-it)

Chanting the ya-ku-si-ne Slow, fast, call and repeat
Have them do the beat then taking yaku clap our the rhythm

Painting brush/rainbow effect on Banaha

Physical gesture to highlight ba-na-ha is 3 beats

General comments

Loved watching the kids reactions to Mary's teaching

Was happy to learn more about finding starting note & tonic sol-fa

Starting to feel more able to teach singing as a means of teaching music. Got new ideas of how to approach notation & simple music theory with children.

Catchiness of tune meant I was singing song again & again

The physicality of Mary's lessons (Children always moving – hand movements etc.)

Loved singing and engaging in yesterday's workshop with the children
Looking forward to teaching some songs in my next TP (5th & 6th Class)

Warm-up very similar to drama warm-up. Siren, vocal projection. Fun & enjoying
Love Lifted Me

The engagement of the children and the retention of what Mary had taught in previous sessions. E.g. 'Stay There'

The need to have a plan for teaching a new song like El Cumbanchero

Pacing the lesson – teacher needs to know the piece well enough so you can move fluidly through the lesson.

Loved the Tony Chestnut idea! Enjoyment children had during El Cumbanchero.
We can assume they would prefer pop!

Loved the idea of getting up and facing each other to sing or making a circle.

Loved learning Tony Chestnut – will definitely use it. Also found discussing teaching ideas in groups for Banaha really helpful. Watch Mary work with the children is great to see what works.

Pooling everyone's ideas was really helpful. Feels like you have a bank of ideas for approaching songs. Feel more confident knowing there is no one correct way to approach things.

There is no prescribed way to teach one song. You will never teach one song the same way. Thinking on your feet. Mood of children will determine how lesson will progress.

Taking responsibility for encouraging a whole school approach to singing. Really support the idea of the group staying in touch. Would be particularly helpful for idea sharing, repertoire etc.

Learned some useful warm-ups to do in class. Really enjoyed the approach to learning the different parts in scoo be doo song. Want to learn more about creative Ireland initiative.

I found the children a little disconnected yesterday. It was great to see ways Mary brought them back into the room – extra animated, using examples children gave and having that one to one moment with them.

Children willing to come to school during holidays because they enjoy the singing workshop / lesson so much.

Feel more confident teaching beat and intonation.

Loved Mary's physical direction while I was in the choir. I could understand her physical gestures and it helped me sing it. I wasn't looking at the music.

Key signature cheat sheet makes me feel much less overwhelmed

Found In the Bleak Mid Winter difficult but really pleased by the end that I could sing it – which is a reminder not to allow myself to be scared off by certain songs. Still feeling overwhelmed by all the ability and talent around me but learning so much.

Being able to listen and hear end results

Loved the scoo be doo song! Children's confidence kept increasing as days / songs to on.

I particularly enjoyed singing 'In The Bleak Mid Winter' in parts. I found singing in small groups and pairs while in a circle / in a line opposite one another very effective!

Mary's connection with the children

Really liked practicing harmony in lots of different grouping combinations - 2 lines / groups of 4 / every 2nd person. Varied repetition.

Reinforcement of techniques through our observation of you both & participation with the kids.

Favourite Activity

Really enjoyed singing In the Bleak Mid Winter – beautiful arrangement and felt the exercise of supporting each other e.g. by looking was very beneficial.

Loved learning and singing In the Bleak Mid Winter, loved chime bars.

Favourite activity: walking to find your singing group! Warm-up ideas: Tony Chestnut, My Bonnie lies over... Working in group to come up with ideas – importance of collaboration!

Tony Chestnut. Don't be afraid of the song – the children love crazy!!

Enjoyment of hearing the singing in parts.

Loved singing in different parts with the other teachers e.g. When The Saints. So nice to feel like part of a choir.

Lean forwards lean backwards.

Tony Chestnut – warm up great fun. Sandwich idea bread/ham/bread

Singing and walking to find group.

Participation in choir warm-up. Song – lean forwards backwards

Singing all the songs. Lots of ideas to incorporate into existing classes. Really admire how Mary connects with the children.

Key Learning Actions

Know what going to teach inside out!! Before class.

Monday's Post-Its (The author wrote the participants' comments below on post-its when looking for feedback on Tuesday morning and displayed them on one of the walls)

Breathing

Red/Green lollipop for inner hearing / focus

Music as a map (focus)

Call and response

Rhythm prep

Feeling the rests, silent gestures

Long-Jump analogy!

Shape of melody with hands

Fill in missing word

Eyes eyebrows high notes

Surprise breath

Hand up when you hear

Appendix 8

Summer course daily critical reflections Day 1 Monday 3rd July - Mary Amond O'Brien

Seating in circle. Mindful breathing – eyes closed, inhale /exhale, becoming conscious of feeling in abdominal area, using analogies ‘smelling flowers’ ‘blowing out candles’. Conscious breathing, inhale through mouth ‘sipping’. Controlled release of breath using ‘ts’ (*letting air out of a tyre*)

‘Sound before symbol / known to unknown’ approach to learning.

- Rhythm stamp/clap warm-up to prepare for Banana. (*Rhythm taken from Part 5*).
- Melody taught by call and response using hand actions to show direction of notes (*Visual, aural and kinaesthetic learners catered for*)
- Singing melody in sol-fa and developed sol-fa exercises using red/green lollipop to encourage inner-hearing of notes from top ‘doh’ down to ‘fa’ as in Part 4 of Banuwa.
- When song is secure divide into parts following from 1-5 and or in groups staying on one-line to achieve 5 parts.
- Formal introductions – name, what class they taught and their experience of singing. Envelope with paper – write name on the envelope, and write expectations of the week on paper, close envelope.
- Cross-curricular ideas – geography / maths (*note values as in fractions and put the semibreve, two minims, four crochets and eight semi-quavers on flip chart*).
- Added L/R/L/R step motion while singing – keeps children focused on keeping the beat and musically engaged.
- ‘Banuwa’ can be used as a ‘whole-school’ song. Can be developed at senior level classes to be sung in parts.
- Questions / comments – difference between shallow breathing and deep abdominal breathing for singing. Child who finds it hard to pitch but is very enthusiastic - ‘Owl’ sounds – one-to-one holding of hands and making eye contact to correct pitch. Experimenting with different kind of voices – ‘have you brought your whispering voice?’ etc. Everyday things like ‘yoo-hoo’ s-m. Random note playing on piano / keyboard. Giving out the music sheet to teachers can be what switches them off – feedback from teachers as to what their opinion was on this. Responses included needing to have recordings of songs to recall the song & not inclined to use books even though available in school. Breathing at the start was helpful - mindfulness more popular in

schools now & helps focus a group. Placing hand on abdomen to feel tummy muscles push outwards and inwards – start with this before connecting the breath to it to make sure singers know the correct action. (No shoulder lifts!) Using consonant ‘k’ – rhythms for tummy action and did ‘Happy Birthday’ and in canon.

- It doesn’t really matter if you don’t read music - the aim is to first and foremost get the children singing, everyone will approach it in a way that fits their own skills. Think of music score as a map. Give out the music in the senior classes 4th – 6th or 3rd – 6th to develop music literacy.
- First page of ‘When Will We Learn’ (Junior Voiceworks 2). Sang through the melody on ‘doo’ and asking singers to raise their hands every time they heard ‘m r d’. Also sang on neutral syllable and asked singers to follow the music as I sang – Q’s What bar number did I stop, what note of the bar? Phrasing – short, short, long. Dropping ‘r’s’ from words ‘learn’ & ‘world’ for good intonation.

Focus / listening based activities / musical engagement / allows teachers to ‘see’ the children being engaged!

- Rhythm stamp /clap
- Call and response
- Using hands to show direction of notes – get singers to do this too
- Red-green lollipop for developing inner-hearing
- Following music as a map – asking questions
- Hands up when you hear ‘m r d’
- Filling in missing word from phrase when chanting (*to learn text*)
- Silent gesture for rests in the music so the rests can be ‘felt’ by the singers.
- Surprise breath – for a quick intake of breath
- Eyes & eye brows for high notes
- Long-jump run up as analogy for breath preparation

Day 2 Tuesday 4th July 2017 - Imelda Andrews.

Critical Reflection – a reasoning process to make meaning of an experience. Critical reflection can be descriptive, analytical and critical, and can be articulated in a number of ways – written form, orally or as an artistic expression.

Action: Mary started with a physical warm up, energetic counting out loud from 1-8 with each hand and each leg, reducing the count by 1 each time till you get to 1.

Observation: Both children and teachers loved it, it got faster and faster, lots of fun and giggling. This warmed up the body, warmed up the mind and got the endorphins to flow, stimulating good feeling throughout the body and stimulating brain activity.

Stamp/clap

Action: How did Mary solve the problem of the stamping and clapping together? The children could clap and stamp, but when put together, some were doing both at the same time.

Observation: Mary modeled correct stamp and clap action and explained that when stamping they were to gesture hands outward to avoid clapping with the stamp. The children immediately copied what Mary did.

Rhythm clapping

Action: Mary modeled two clapping rhythm patterns as in call-and-response with the children copying after each demonstration. Mary then used the flip chart with FOUR rhythms patterns, she asked the children could they pick from the chart the two rhythms she had clapped.

Observation: Mary gave all those with their hand up a chance to answer never once did she say “that’s wrong” or “no” - instead she listened and then she just let them know that some were half right, some were right and some very close. The children were finding one of the rhythm patterns a bit difficult to get so Mary replaced part of the rhythm with ‘syn-co-pa’ as in ‘syncopation and they immediately got it. She had to think on her feet to do this. The rhythm patterns were taken from Duck Dance so this was preparing them in advance for the song – internalizing the rhythm before singing it.

Duck Dance

Action: The children were very clear pronouncing the words and the rhythms were precise. How did Mary get them to accent the words that needed to be accented?

Observation: Firstly she recalled the performance from a few weeks ago to see what they remembered about learning the song. She reminded them about the place where the full group had a problem with one of the pitches and asked if anyone remembered how she had corrected it. To her amazement and I think every one else, one boy remembered that to correct the pitch that was to remain stationary Mary

replaced the words with 'stay there'. Mary demonstrated how she had done this along with drawing the shape with her hand.

Sometimes it is important to think outside the box and find ways to teach that stay with them. Looking at 'ho ke lay ho-o-o" what did Mary do to make the 'ho' stay longer? She used both hands, one hand making a spinning motion towards the other hand, this created a 'ringing' sound in the room, they continued singing it until Mary stopped. Mary also gestured her hand forward allowing the sound to continue, they kept the sound going. Mary didn't conduct this piece in a pattern form, they responded to all her gestures.

Zulu Warrior

Action: Mary modeled the sounds 'zimba' 'zaya' in different ways - lazy voice, energetic voice to demonstrate what can be done with the 'Z' sound – how it sounded and felt!

Observation: Mary asked them which one would engage an audience more? Before answering she modeled both ways for them – lazy & energized. She spoke about the possibility of someone listening to it on the radio – would the listeners be able to hear the singers enjoying their singing or coming across as bored! Mary then talked about words 'there' and 'warrior' and dropping the 'r' from both words. She explained why this is done. She then turned her back to the children and modeled both ways with the 'r' and without the 'r' and asked them to say which one was the correct one. By doing this you are allowing the children to become part of the process and when they contribute to decisions it is easier for them to remember and they feel valued and respected. Mary is always aware of the children, not only as a choir but also as individuals, she is constantly observing things that they might be doing themselves to help them get the right beat/rhythm. She told of the time a few weeks ago when she had seen one of the students do silent gestures to keep in time to the music. If Mary thinks that something she has observed will work for everyone she will use and thank the child for being 'her teacher'.

Lean Forward Lean Backwards

Action: This is a fun warm up with plenty of movement. It is important that when you are demonstrating movement that you mirror the movement – if you are asking them to move to the 'right' you must go to the 'left'.

Observation: Mary interrupted the 'Love Lifted Me' section to correct something – one or two people were singing the low note incorrectly or lazily. Mary used the word SPACIOUS, HIGH AND FORWARD...asked them to think of the word 'love' as 'lawve' - this changed the sound of the word. She then used the idea of throwing a ball upwards on the word 'love' and catching it on the word 'lifted' while lifting the hand (this was to maintain intonation) and continued to gesture her hand forward on the word 'me' to hold the sound.

‘My Big Brother’/A Tall Story

Action: Just before the 12noon break one of the children had mentioned that they loved ‘My Big Brother’/A Tall Story so Mary moved over to play the piano and the children sang it.

Observation: The children took control, they remembered all the words, and they also remember the pause. They told a story and expressed it on their faces. Even though Mary had her back to the children she had given them enough tools when teaching them the song that they knew how to direct themselves.

El Cumbanchero

Action: (*after 12noon break*) Children were staying on for another 45minutes. This was a new piece for all the children. Most of teachers sat and observed Mary work and some stayed and sang with the children.

Observation: Mary started with chanting Speedy Gonzales ‘Undelay undelay ariba ariba’ in Italian/Spanish ‘front of mouth’ way to prepare for the words. She then moved on to ‘cumba’ – told the children to say it three times and on the fourth to change it to ‘cumban’ – she got them to think about how the letter ‘n’ is made. She invited them to shape their ‘oo’s’ with their lips and then allowed them to do ‘oo’s’ with no shape so they could hear and experience the difference in sound. Mary then clapped the quick ‘Bongo sero que se va’ at the end of the first page. She got them to sing the full scale descending from top ‘doh’ with hand signs. On a neutral syllable she added the other notes and did a hand action. Mary asked the children how many patterns there were and counted on her fingers as they sang. When the children added the words Mary got them to articulate the final three ‘bongo sero que se va’ by changing direction or looking at one of the teachers. She also experimented with them pretending that they were thinking of something by placing their index finger and thumb on their face and then pointing their finger immediately as if suddenly remembering ‘bongo sero’.

Day 3 Wednesday 5th July 2017 - Imelda Andrews

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Author *FLOW: The Psychology of Happiness*)

Every performance programme should include a large percent of easy, smaller percentage of medium and the smallest percentage of advanced repertoire.

DO SOMETHING THAT CHALLENGES THEM AND CHALLENGES YOU!

Banaha: Everyone was handed the sheet music of Banaha and was asked to look at it individually first and then in three groups. What teaching ideas can you come up with individually and then in collaboration with your group. Some of the following ideas were given as examples of what to consider. Where to start? What activities to use? What musical elements can be incorporated? How can I teach the rhythm/beat? What bodily actions / percussion can be used - clapping / stamping /tapping etc. How can I experiment with vocal sounds besides just the singing voice? Chant -high/low slow/fast loud/soft posh/funny, call/response, sol-fa, can I identify rhythm or melody patterns? Do I know what key it is in? Can I find ‘doh’?

Warm-Ups

Tony Chestnut: (Imelda taught this) This is a gem of a piece, I asked the children about the words, one child answered and demonstrated what actions to use. We went straight into singing the song. I paused naturally at the end of each phrase to allow everyone to take in both the words and actions. Mary started in the key of D and moved it up a semi-tone each time in keeping with warming up the vocal range. As the children were getting more familiar with the movement, we sang it faster and faster to add a bit of fun. I invited the children to turn around to face the teachers, they did and seemed to enjoy. I asked the children if we were to leave out some of the action words which ones would they choose and they decided to leave out the words ‘TOE’ and ‘NOSE’. I instructed everyone that when they came to these words they were to continue with the action but to sing internally / in their head. Some singers kept putting in NOSE. I made a conscious effort to show a silent gesture to remind singers of the silence and it worked much better. Fun had by all!

My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean: Another little gem for the bag of tricks. Mary encouraged everyone to take a breath and went straight into singing it. She sang it a couple of times, as some of the children were not familiar with it. Mary drew ‘rainbows’ to encourage phrasing. The children copied Mary with this. Mary told them that there were a lot of words beginning with the letter ‘B’ so she wanted them to stand on the 1st word beginning with ‘B’ and sit on the next word and continue like this through the rest of the song. She demonstrated the first two phrases. The children really enjoyed this, as there were a lot of words beginning with ‘B’ that they had to think about – a great way of waking the mind and body and also focusing.

Banaha

Action: (from the original *Voiceworks 2 book*) Mary started with, 1,2,3 stamp, clap, clap – the stamp/clap fitting the ‘Banaha’ at the end of ‘Yah Koo See Neh Lah Doo’ section. Mary repeated this stamp/clap rhythm a couple of times until they got it. Only then did Mary introduce the word ‘BANAHA’. She counted 1,2,3 and pointed the rhythm of the word as it was spoken. Mary then worked backwards with text starting with call / response on ‘SEE NA LA DO’...Mary used different voices, shaping the lips children repeated. Mary then added ‘YA KU’ and asked the children which word was strong syllable. Now they had the full ‘YA KU SEE NA LA DO’. Mary encouraged them to use the tongue more on this line, ‘enjoy the ‘L’s’, the feel of them in their mouth as they helped define the pronunciation. Only then did Mary give the children the visual of the words on the board.

To encourage/improve pitching Mary punched ‘DOH DOH DOH’ in the air, then used DOH RE ME....ME RE DOH using hand signals. She then sang DOH RE out loud and gestured the final DOH to see if the children would automatically answer with the correct pitch. They all didn’t get this at first so Mary explained more clearly that she wanted them to fill in the silent note! Once YA KU SEE NA LA DO, was secured through sofa, Mary used call / response or Q/A on SI SI and the children responded with YA KU this was done three times placing the notes each time. Mary took out each of the three ‘Yah Koo’ sections with sol-fa hand signs and made sure everyone was secure with them.

This developed into the singers being invited to choose part 1, 2 or 3, not telling the person beside them which one they chose. The singers were then instructed that they would be invited to walk around the room singing the part they chose and if they met anyone else singing their part they were to stay with them until it ended up with three different groups singing each individual part. They were then invited to begin walking around the room to establish a beat. After a few bars Mary gave the starting notes for each part, counted 1,2 3 and everyone started singing the part they had picked and kept singing until everyone had found the group they belonged with.

Observation: At no time did Mary tell the children that this was a new piece of music, and it was only when they had some of it secure that she showed them the words. Some pitching problems occurred, how did Mary solve it?

She got everyone to sing ‘SOH’ while looking around the room making eye contact with others until everyone was on the same note. To help the children find the name of the note before HIGH DOH on the YA KU section Mary had them sing the sol-fa going up and then coming down...now what’s the name of the note? Simple but effective as the children found it out for themselves.

Three groups numbered 1, 2, and 3, each group was given a line of YA KU SEE NA LA DO to sing starting on a different note. This worked very well, but why did Mary do this? The rhythm in the first two lines is the same but the last is a little different...she did this so they really could hear the difference when singing them together. There is still a little pitching problem, Mary knew at this stage she had to think on her feet, so as not to point at any particular group she asked everyone with

birthday in January, February and March, sing... anyone with brown eyes, shoe size 5 etc. All parts were now secure.

This increased their confidence and helped them concentrate on their own part, while listening to others. After walking around the room Mary challenged the group to sing the whole piece on their own in unison, Mary pointed out that she had not taught the first part of each section but they had heard it many times in call-and- response. Mary was handing over responsibility to the singers to see if they remembered.

El Cumbanchero

Action: Mary worked on different fun ways of pronouncing the second syllable of Cumbanchero - CHERO - silly voice, opera, Spanish etc. The children sang what they had learnt yesterday without Mary conducting or playing. They remembered it very well. Mary asked the teachers what in the music would help determine the tempo of the piece.... what would you look for? By looking at the whole piece bar 18 stands out as the rhythm is quite fast – how fast the singers can recite this in their speaking voice will determine the overall tempo.

Observation: Mary told the children that she trusted them to remember the piece of music, it was also important that they trusted her to bringing them in. She did this by giving them a surprise breath just slightly ahead of their entries. On the second section the teachers did the call and the children the response. How did Mary get them to be clear and strong on BUM BUM BAH and TUM TUM TA? She got them to push out their lips, loosen the jaw and pretend to blow the trombone. To cement this she got them to take a surprise breath at the beginning of BUM BUM AND TUM TUM.

The teachers were having a little difficulty tuning the second phrase, she explained why it might be happening and explained the difference between major 3rd and minor 3rd to help solve the problem. Mary played the piano and gave verbal cues for entries as she played the accompaniment. Everyone agreed to move the music of bar 18 to the final quaver beat of bar 17 as it fitted the rhythm and inflection of the words better and was easier to articulate the words clearly – decisions like this are fine if it serves the performance better. When Mary asked the children did they like the piece, they all said yes. When she asked them why, they said the following: *'fast beat, crazy, made up words, no big words, imagination, you dont hear a piece like this very often, when you are having a bad day you can think of this piece and it will make you happy again, lyrics are fun'*. When Mary asked them what picture they see in their head when they hear the song, they said: fireworks, Spanish hats, and Spanish dancers.

When Will We Learn

Action: Mary started to teach this by call and response. She used her hands when she wanted the voice to go up or down. She also secured words by leaving out some and asking them to fill in. Mary played it on the piano, the teachers sang the verses and the children sang the chorus.

Observation: Mary decided not to teach it through sol-fa as time was running out and she wanted to see how quick they could learn it by singing it with the words. Mary explained to the teachers that if the children had not got the pitches correct she would have reverted to sol-fa to fix them. To help the children with the long and short notes, Mary asked them to pretend that they had a paint brush in their hands, paint the fence while singing, sometimes they had long strokes (for the long notes) and sometimes short strokes, (for the short notes). The children really took control of this.

Mary asked the children ‘how would they put the question to the song?’ She advised them to look at the person beside them and sing the ‘question’ this was also helped by facial expressions. Mary noticed a pitching problem on first bar of page 2 on the word ‘WHEN’, how did she solve it? She went back to WHEN WILL WE bar 12, m,m,r and she asked them to sing WHEN WILL WE WHEN ... m,m,r,m , this helped bring them back to the ‘m’ that was needed on bar 14. How did Mary stop the break in the phrase between MADE and FOR? She took the ‘d’ sound from the end of ‘made’ and placed it just before the word FOR – which then became d’FOR . She did the same with the IT and BE – taking the ‘t’ from IT and placing it directly before the BE – which becomes t’BE! These choices are optional – play around with them!

Day 4 Thursday 6th July 2017 - Imelda Andrews

Music Literacy

Action: Karen (*Author's note – Karen was a participant on the course and is also a teaching colleague of the author*) compiled a music literacy sheet explaining, scales and key signatures. Each scale was written out in sol-fa. This will make it a little easier for everyone to decide what key a piece of music is in and to determine where DOH is. Mary invited the teachers to write in the relative minor keys to each major key.

Observation: While going through the sheet, Mary gave some ideas on how to practice pitching, example, NA NA NA NA NA (s,m,l,s,m), placing the sol-fa notes on the body, using the stop/go sign to help develop Inner Hearing / Audiation. 'Green' = vocalize / sing, 'red' = 'silent-sing' inside the head / hear the note inside. Mary said the children would need reminders to continue to sing 'inside' for the RED side! The stop/go sign can be used with any warm up or song. It brings focus to everyone and silence to the classroom as everyone listens! Mary taught the song 'DOH IS LIKE A ROCK' which teaches the sol-fa hand signs.

Scoo Be Doo Song

Action: Mary greeted the choir by chanting GOOD MORNING, HOW ARE YOU - the children copied, she used different pitch levels of high/low etc. Mary continued with this by adding I'M FINE THANK YOU. The children had fun with this and without telling them directly, Mary was preparing them for the high notes in Scoo Be Doo. Mary then modeled STAMP, CLAP, (Doo-doo-). She only modeled once and the children copied, Mary added STAMP, CLAP, STAMP, STAMP, STAMP, CLAP (matching the rhythm of Part 1)

Observation: Through call and response Mary chanted DOO DE DOO and spent time helping the children shape the 'Doo's'. She invited them use their hand to bring / drag the sound from their mouth using the thumb, index and middle fingers. To take the challenge out of the high note Mary got them to pretend to THROW BALL up with one hand AND CATCH with the other on the low 'Doo' of DOO DE DOO. She then sang part 1 legato style (notes smoothly connected to one another) using the rainbow shape. Because the music shows rest between DOO DOO DOO, Mary encouraged the children to put a 'surprise breath' between each DOO.

To define this sound Mary asked the children to pretend they were robots...how would this improve the sound? Moving their body on each DO brought this type of 'scat syllable' song to life. Mary then had fun with mouth shaping 'SCOOBY DOO' she asked them to shape it in a 'sluggish' way, (*a new word one of the children created to describe a lazy way of singing!*). By showing them the lazy way and then the right way they could make the decision as to which way was the most musical and engaging. Mary asked them to place both index fingers at either side of the mouth; she did this so they could measure the distance between the fingers on 'SCOO' and 'BE'. If the fingers were narrower on the 'SCOO' then this was the correct shape! WE HEAR EVERYTHING BUT DO WE LISTEN ALL THE TIME? Mary then invited the children to close their eyes and listen to it in 2 different ways, one unshaped and one shaped and they chose the 'shaped' sound as better one – eyes

closed = greater focus for listening! Mary then demonstrated Part 2 SCOOBY DOO melody shape using her fingers. When part 2 and 3 were secure they put them together and had the singers making eye contact with one another. Mary then modeled '1,2,3,4, CLAP, point the finger' in preparation for the correct entry for 'BOP'. Mary was not happy with the weak sound of the 'P' consonant so invited She did this by the children to place their hand in front of their mouth to see if they could feel the 'puff' of air when they used 'BOP' & 'WOP' – she repeated this a few times till she was happy everyone understood what she was asking them to do. Part 5 has the following actions 'Stamp' 'Clap' 'Clickin'' 'flap'. Mary instructed the action must be done on the action word and encouraged the teachers to look carefully around the room when teaching it, especially for the 'clap' and 'flap' as they are syncopated. (As I was writing this I thought of a short piece with these exact actions, which could be done as a warm-up to this piece -

d t, d r m r d m r m f s
 FIRST YOU MAKE YOUR FINGERS CLICK, THEN YOU STAMP YOUR FEET,

s s m f m r d s, s, d
 BOTH HANDS SLAP YOUR KNEES AND CLAP ON THE BEAT

Mary invited me to demonstrate how I do this piece with Aspiro Juniors...we spoke about Scooby Doo the dog, how he walks, what he does and how he likes to play his instrument. Scooby also likes to stamp his feet, clap his hands, clicking fingers and flapping arms. Fun had by all. Mary then divided the group in two and had one group do the beat with hands crossing over L R on chest while the other group clapped the rhythm of the melody. Scooby Doo is in 5 PARTS... Mary asked everyone to pick a line and sing it; some were reluctant to sing the last line, as that's the line to start 1st. If this happens one way of solving is by doing it through the birthday calendar - Jan, Feb, Mar, sing part 1, Apr, May June part 2, etc.

When Will We Learn

Action: Mary played the piece and everyone sang and sang it with good feel and expression. Mary then corrected the starting note and notes of bar 14, which had been a problem from yesterday.

Observation: Mary invited the singers to draw a 'forward' / 'outward' rainbow using the index finger for all the long notes – this helps maintain the 'singing through' of the note to avoid the sound becoming weak. Then she asked them to make a slight 'pulse' at the end of 'rainbow' and to place the breath in preparation for the next phrase on this 'pulse'. Younger children might only need the words; older children can be given the music. If you give them the music, get them to look at it with you, map it out, for those who struggle reading the music or following it, by having a map they will follow. Mary went through the performance map for WHEN WILL WE LEARN - chorus, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, coda. The word WHEN should be pronounced as if it was spelled 'hwen' – this makes it sound 'HOO-EN'. This song needs a lot of feeling and expression, getting the message across, asking the question 'when will we learn?' Mary demonstrated how to lead this song without having to know the traditional conducting patterns – using

rainbows, using fingers to count the long notes, breathing FOR the choir so they breath with you and not being afraid to be ‘bigger’ when needed!

In The Bleak Midwinter

Action: Mary started this piece of music by call and response on 1. l,t,d 2. l,t,d,r,m 3 m,r,d,t,l 4. l, m(pushing out the m) 5.m,r (pushing out the r and l,m...,l (slipping in a quick l) m,r,. These pitch exercises were preparing the singers to sing the opening phrase ‘In The Bleak Midwinter’.

Observation: After singing the 1st line, Mary asked them to repeat it and this time when the sing it take the ‘k’ off ‘bleak’ and put it on to ‘midwinter’ = kmidwinter! Drop the ‘r ‘ from ‘winter’ now it looks and sounds like this - ‘IN THE BLEA... KMID WINDTEH’. Why did Mary do this? By dropping the ‘k’ it stops the break between ‘bleak’ and ‘mid’ and dropping the ‘r’ helps with maintaining good intonation. R’s dropped here too - ‘EARTH STOOD HARD’. Mary asked about WATER LIKE A STONE - had they seen this pattern anywhere else? Yes, some answered its similar to the pattern in El Cumbanchero...always look carefully at the piece of music and find things that are familiar to you, that you may have done before.

Mary asked everyone to think back to the holding of the BREATH from the early morning breathing session - the feeling in the stomach when you hold the breath is what helps ‘support’ the sound on long held notes and long phrases – she had asked them to do this to help prepare for the long notes. How do you create a soft ‘piano’ dynamic throughout the piece? Sing as if you were telling a secret to your friend. Err on the side of making a slight crescendo on long held notes to avoid a weakening of the pitch. If you have a problem getting an interval, use sol-fa, auditate /silent- sing in your head, then sing the note you need. It is just like working out a mathematics sum! Mary pointed out how words are divided over more than one note - the word FALLEN - instead of singing it as written (fall on the first note and en on the second) she said to cross off the two ‘L’s and place them before the ‘en’ to maintain a legato sound.

Mary asked the children to sing the word “snow” ‘slouchy’! Now sing it with the shaped vowel - without telling them, they took responsibility and made the decision that the shaped one was the most musical. To create a flute like sound on ‘snow ‘ Mary had the singers place their hand with limp wrist at the side of their mouth and slowly rising the wrist encourage the soft palate inside the mouth to rise or become ‘tall’ as happens when you yawn. Mary also got the singers to imagine they were pulling a string from the back of your neck and over your head, to encourage the sound to ‘ring’. Ee Ay Ah Oh and OO in singing are referred to as Glottal Onsets, how did Mary demonstrate this? When singing the word ‘ON’, pinch your finger and thumb together and open immediately just as you pronounce the word ‘ON’.

When the children left, Mary invited the teachers to sing IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER as a round.

1. Sitting in two groups
2. Standing facing a partner to encouraging one another, two or three to a part.
3. Every second person part 1 & 2.

4. Experimented with chimes. The piece improved each time it was sung and all singers seemed to become more comfortable the more times it was sung. A beautiful sound filled the room.

There are lots of ways to perform this piece - 1.instrumental 2.instrumental and humming / oo's 3.unison. 4.unison and chimes 5.round (twice) 6.instrument and unison 7.instrumental.

Day 5 Friday 7th JULY 2017 - Mary and Imelda

Penguin Song

Action:

Imelda started off the day with 'Penguin' from Singing Sherlock through call-and-response. After completing the song each participant was given a copy of the song to show how the 'Penguin' can be used to teach d,r,m,f,s and 'lah' too. Imelda then proceeded to do some games in a circle with a beach ball.

Focus game 1: Imelda asked the group to focus and be aware of their surroundings and one another. The idea of the 1st game is to keep the ball in the air while counting and not letting it fall. While most people will do their best to keep the ball in the air, we have to be aware of keeping it steady, to count and not to get giddy or feel we need to apologise if it falls.

Focus game 2: (extension of game 1) Pick a person to throw the ball to, you must throw the ball to the same person every time, if the ball is dropped, pick it up and start again - the hardest part of this is to keep focused and not to feel you need to apologise if you drop the ball. It's amazing how difficult we adults find this, so we need to ask ourselves what are OUR expectations of children when we ask them to focus? We added another challenge to this game - once you threw the ball you had to swap places with a different person – after throwing the ball, walk to a person in the circle, tap them on the shoulder, you take their place and they repeat the process with someone else...every time you move you take the place of the person whose shoulder you tapped. Now the focus becomes intense, because the person you are throwing the ball to is in a different place each time.

Imelda's Observation: when we introduced the 2nd movement, everyone made more eye contact, non-verbal communication in terms of direction improved and there was a definite sense of teamwork. I was reminded of the juniors I work with... some have no problem coming forward, some might like to stay in the background but it doesn't mean that they are not focusing and taking it in.

Mary's Observation: - When I returned to the room Imelda was just about to begin the next level of the game where you had to swap places with a person after you threw the ball. I could sense an intense focus from everyone but in particular I was drawn to the attention and focus that seemed to be in everyone's eyes with regard to peripheral vision and being aware of the movement of people within the circle, which is vital to the success of the game. Discussion took place as to how the game could be linked to singing – I suggested that on each throw of the ball the person throwing could sing the first note of the major scale 'doh' as they throw, the person who catches it then sings 'r' and so on. Imelda also demonstrated throwing the ball while vocalising and getting the recipient to copy the vocalisation back - call and response – this would be helpful for children who may be shy in vocalising on their own.

Crash Beep Beep

Action: -When the children arrived I invited Imelda to teach 'Crash Crash Beep Beep' (action song incorporating story telling from The Singing Sherlock series)

with the group. The teachers sat in front of the children facing them. Mary had asked the children to observe the teachers' musical engagement as part of this final session so that each of the children could choose one teacher to give a small gift to at the end of the session. Imelda started with some 'winking' inviting each of the children to 'wink' – she spent time going around each one to see if they could wink. (The wink is part of the Romeo and Juliet verse). She then proceeded to chant the text and actions for '*honk honk round and round and round and crash beep beep*' and once they had this mastered she introduced the melody. When the full song was complete Mary pointed out that the starting notes are a combination of soh mi and lah (the 'na na na na na' taunt) and the end of the second short phrase is m r d. Mary commented on the many times have we seen and heard 'mi re do' in various songs throughout the week.

Observation

The children were very quick to pick up the actions – Imelda was very clear and was 'bigger' in front of the children, very animated. If we want children to do this we need to be 'bigger' and not be afraid to be animated at all times! It draws them in and they want to learn!

The Saints Go Marching In

Action:

Mary asked everyone to sing 'The Saints Go Marching In'. She asked them to leave out the 'r' letters in 'marching' and 'number' – as a person with an English accent would do. Mary taught a new piece 'I'm gonna sing' to everyone. She asked how many times 'mi re do' appears in the song and proceeded to sing the song while counting on her fingers showing how many were heard. This kept the focus of the group, as they had to watch as Mary raised each finger to count. Mary then demonstrated how this could be sung along with 'The Saints Go Marching In'. 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' was added into the mix and all three songs were sung together, starting with 'The Saints Go Marching In' adding 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' and finally 'I'm Gonna Sing'.

Observation:

Dropping the 'r's are vital to good intonation and achieving 'oneness' in the voices. Use of the fingers is helpful to the more visual learners in the room.

Dreamer

Action:

Mary invited the children to sing 'Dreamer' for the teachers - they had sung it in their concert a few weeks previous. 'Dreamer' is from Junior Voiceworks 1 book. The teachers followed along and joined in with the singing. Mary demonstrated conducting 3 beats in a bar and then one beat in a bar – she invited half of the group to close their eyes while they listened to the other half sing while Mary conducted 3 beats to a bar. Then Mary conducted a macro 1 in each bar and asked could a difference be heard in the singing.

Observation:

It was clear to everyone that when conducting in 3 the piece came across more weighty and syllabic while when conducted in a macro 1 the phrases were more connected (legato) and lighter.

This ended the morning session. The children were given a sheet of paper and invited to write down their experiences of the four days they had spent as 'choir-in-residence'.

Afternoon session

Time was invested in singing most of the songs learned and used in the workshops with the teachers during the course of the week to allow teachers to record them on their phone - Zulu Warrior, Duck Dance, Dreamer, El Cumbanchero, When Will We Learn, In the Bleak Mid Winter, (Banaha or Banuwa were not recorded).

The teachers filled in the official Department of Education evaluation form and Mary wrote up some questions to be answered for her evaluation purposes. The last few minutes of the course were spent looking at some websites in particular www.sightsingingschool.com and www.teachingkidstosing.com.

Certificates were distributed, an email list of all participants was created and goodbyes were exchanged!

Appendix 9

Individual and group teaching ideas assignment - Banaha

Sol-fa hand signs for kinaesthetic learning

Sandwich Analogy – your part needs to be thicker (*Group had heard this analogy during demonstration*)

Stop and hold notes when teacher gestures – are they looking and listening?

Visual aids with sol-fa signs to help show melody and skipped notes.

Dotted minim – cross-body movement or paintbrush

Intonation – shaping lips – which syllable is stronger

Hold note and look around make eye contact to correct pitch

Rhythm Stamp/Clap ‘Ya Ku si ne la du’

Chanting

Sing Call and response different voices

Start with 2nd section as it starts with d r m

Teach ‘si ne le du ba na ha’ and then add ‘ya ku’

Hand signals fully engages all singers

Walk and find your singing partner

Call and response

Words to rhythms

Paint pot idea for long notes

Don’t always start the lesson at the beginning of the song

What could have been a complex song broken down into simplistic sections

Start with ‘beat in the feet rhythm in the hands’ – one group to do the beat and the other group do the rhythm

Chanting words - different pitch placing

Hula-hoop sol-fa ladder

Chanting words / echo clapping / singing to sol-fa

Hand gestures – sol-fa and conducting

Feet stamping beat and hand clapping rhythm

Recognise m r d in song when listening

Pick out familiar patterns

Using rhythm sticks for accents

Physical gesture to highlight the 3 beats

Reviewing rhythms: picking out the correct notes for rhythms learnt.

Painting brush / rainbow effect on Banaha

Moving from 2nd section to 3rd – sing scale, remove notes one at a time to help the interval F sharp to D.

Sing and children fill in the blanks.

Beat in your feet, rhythm in your hands

Have them do the beat then taking ‘Ya Ku’ out, clap out the rhythm. Use drums for first parts.

Chanting the ‘yak u si ne le du’ – slowly, fast, call-and-response.

Appendix 10

Children's choir-in-residence evaluation

Write down some thing about your experience

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | I liked teaching the teachers and the songs and the language and the shaped lips and the McDonalds. |
| P2 | I liked the singing, McDonalds, friends, teaching the teachers, the games the vocal instructor. |
| P3 | If has been a great time here in St. Joseph's School. I loved singing with the students and I thought we sounded lovely all together. <i>(Author's note -The students that P3 is referring to are the teachers!)</i> |
| P4 | It has been a lovely time here at St. Joseph's School. First of all it was fun and I wasn't sitting at home bored. 2 nd of all I learned a lot of new things and it was a great experience. And I love to sing out of 'oo it was oo' and I would love to come back next year. Thank you to everybody that helped me. |
| P5 | I liked the way we learned songs in different languages. I liked teaching the teachers. I liked getting McDonalds. |
| P6 | I loved teaching the teachers, singing the songs, and shaping my lips!!! |
| P7 | The songs were good and it was fun <i>(drew a love heart)</i> . Teaching the teachers and its something to do in the summer. |
| P8 | I liked it because it was silly songs and I learned something new each day. It was a huge pleasure working with them and I came across lovely teachers and they all have lovely voices <i>(drew a love heart)</i> . I would love to work with them again <i>(drew a love heart and XOXO)</i> |
| P9 | I really liked it because we learned to * and we got gifts and it was so so fun I really loved. I would love to come again. <i>(*Author's note – could not decipher word)</i> |
| P10 | I really enjoyed being the teacher and having McDonalds thank you so much. |
| P11 | Mary is a wonderful teacher. I think 100/100 of her work the teachers too. We have learned how to shape our lips when singing we also got McDonalds. Thanks for everything, yours sincerely... |
| P12 | McDonalds, Games, Singing those songs, Making new friends, Having a laugh (grown up food) Nutella sandwiches, Frizby outside, giving people gifts (pencil=students) <i>(children were given pencils to award to teachers who they felt were being good students)</i> Having fun. |
| P13 | I really really liked it because we got to teach the teachers, we also got to learn lots of new songs meet new friends and learn things to help us sing. |

Appendix 11

Summer course participant evaluation

Table 11.1 Key learning methods or tools from the course

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | Great opportunity for me to learn and discover new material. I loved watching Mary and Imelda interact with the children. I was familiar with some of the material but found different ways to use it. I was also inspired to use more “challenging” material with the group I teach at the moment (JI/SI after-school). As I don’t teach in a school and am not part of a staff, I really valued the chance to talk to other like-minded teachers who love music and singing. |
| P2 | How simple / life relatable methods <u>work!</u> The quality of the voiceworks (book). How my own background in choral experiences particularly as an adult is hugely beneficial for teaching |
| P3 | Allowing children to hear another group singing with / without good technique (e.g. shaping mouth) Developing <u>internal</u> auditory and rhythmic abilities - really helps focus and engagement...if successful, it could enable children to sight-sing simple bars. |
| P4 | Simple strategies for helping the children to pitch and use their ‘head voice’ e.g. “yoo hoo”, siren, mmmm |
| P5 | Not to shy away from difficult songs. Teachers are limiting children’s experience because the teacher thinks the child won’t be able when asked. The children loved the nonsense songs and songs with different languages. |
| P6 | Ways to use your body and movement to conduct. Learned new songs and used resources suitable for all aged. Integrating music through other curriculum areas. |
| P7 | Use of tonic sol-fa. All children can sing. Breathing and pitching exercises. Stay with a song – do lots with one song / piece. |
| P8 | Learning that it is ok to conduct without beating time i.e.beating out $\frac{3}{4}$ etc. patterns. How to repeat and practice in different ways by group. Starting at end of a phrase and building it up rather than starting at the beginning of phrase. Choosing areas / phrases to do call-and-response. |
| P9 | Key learning moments all occurred when the children were in front of Mary. Seeing how she used visual, aural and kinaesthetic methodologies to get the wanted sound, correct mistakes and teach the music. |
| P10 | As a drama facilitator I use vocal sirens and physical warm-up – never thought of using with music. Embodiment / engagement are the same! Breaking down song to chanting / repeat rhythms – brilliant! |
| P11 | Any song is possible as long as you are well prepared. Different ways to help the children sing in tune. Ways of engaging the children. |
| P12 | Knowing that I can break a piece into manageable chunks and I can start anywhere in the piece. That I don’t have to start with music per se but use rhythm and or beat to begin or chant the words. |
| P13 | As a teacher with limited singing ability, I’ve really been impressed with the teaching styles taught. It made reaching those high notes more accessible. Now I feel more confident about not only reaching those notes myself but helping my students to get there too |
| P14 | The necessity of having time to prepare rhythms/melodies from songs to incorporate into warm-up, preparation work to prevent common misstep / tricky interval etc. Also the need for a physical response & engagement. |
| P15 | Just get started! Stand up in front of your choir and sing. Start easy sing and response. Clap rhythm, rap lyrics in time. |
| P16 | Using real life analogies to explain techniques and mindful breathing to start sessions. Whole body warm-ups (not just vocal). Different ways of doing rounds/parts (not just one half of group against the other). Focussing on rhythm before melody. Changing to learn rhythm/ lyrics. Importance of teaching sounds/particular techniques to improve enunciation. |

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P17 | Music as a constantly active subject; through actions in songs, through the action of singing, engaging stomach, using eyebrows, loose heads/bodies, actions not associated with a certain song e.g. throwing and catching a ball for phrasing, rainbows etc. |
| P18 | Watching the children being taught. Breaking down a whole piece. Starting small and working up to the full piece. Re-evaluated my thinking on what a 'choir song' is. Not to be <u>so</u> concerned with annunciation – particularly word endings. The physicality of the lessons. |
| P19 | Using <u>movement</u> to help singers to learn – kinesiology and how movement of body helps learning. Observing teaching children – seeing both verbal and non-verbal interaction. Improving <u>quality</u> of the singing through intonation and better breathing. Very practical & relevant throughout. |

Table 11.2 Advantages and or disadvantages of working with a choir-in-residence

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | Watching Mary interact with the children was wonderful. We could immediately see the results of her actions, tricks to get better singing etc. We could also see how much the children enjoyed singing and how quickly they could learn. |
| P2 | Getting feedback on songs, what they enjoyed isn't what we always assume!! Maybe were you able to achieve the same through video examples? Yet, very beneficial to see you reacting on your feet as children reacted (etc.) |
| P3 | Advantage of children being here: seeing and hearing their responses. Observing when they might begin to lose focus. |
| P4 | Advantages of having the children -Wonderful to see how Mary made them so responsible for their learning, giving them choices, asking their opinions, asking for feedback. Constant positive interactions with them. |
| P5 | Adv ->I would have thought - there is no way kids would enjoy that song, but having them here and hearing and seeing their feedback has made me more confident. I'm confident that the more OTT you are they respond positively. I would have been nervous to be so dramatic beforehand. No disadvantages – it was a really classroom experience with real children it was great to see what worked and when it didn't work what was done. |
| P6 | It was great having the children in the workshop. Their voices added colour to our group and kept the focus on the learning and singing of <u>the child</u> . |
| P7 | Great to have children to observe what got their attention and how to engage them. |
| P8 | Great to have children here to see new songs being taught to them. To see them doing warm-ups and their reaction to everything. Great to see level they have achieved and how quickly they pick up new songs. Would definitely like them in CPD workshop if I was to do it again. |
| P9 | The children really improved the experience as it allowed me to see that through Mary's enthusiasm, energy and skill what the child can achieve. Has shown me that sometimes I underestimate my kids. They are only as open and as able as I make myself. |
| P10 | Children were great – seeing it at work – it was <u>real raw</u> learning not artificial trying to imagine how it might go. Real teaching and thinking on your feet |
| P11 | Wide variety of songs and the opportunities to perform well as being as to see methodologies for teaching them. It was great that it was mixed gender and ages, as this is often the case in whole school choirs. |
| P12 | Loved having the children – lovely to get their perspective and see what they found easy/difficult. I'm in learning support + / resource. |
| P14 | See now they engage with this type of teaching. Maybe the two sessions was too long for them? Loss of concentration. |
| P15 | Very practical! It put all the tips /tricks into practice in front of our eyes. I saw how a song developed from being in unison to rounds, to finished product. |
| P16 | Having the children – really good idea! Was very helpful seeing techniques being used in a realistic setting. Also nice to see how they responded to analogies and how they enjoyed songs from various genres, not just typical pop/chart songs. |
| P17 | Having the children in the room was a definite advantage. It showed the practicality of the things we were learning. We saw the ways in which they became engaged / interested and how Mary held their attention. |
| P18 | Having children present was a <u>huge</u> advantage. Opportunity to see <u>how</u> to teach a song. Realised how important it was for the children to be physically /actively engaged throughout the lesson. |
| P19 | Absolutely, must have children as part of learning to teach children as can see their interaction / engagement/needs. |

Participant thirteen did not answer this question.

Table 11.3 More confident in teaching singing? YES/NO? Please elaborate

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | Re-energised and inspired. Lots of new ideas to use with my existing age group and also ambitious to take on additional challenges and teaching work. |
| P2 | Yes! Simple yet highly effective methods. Empowering rather than being pitched too highly even for my likes with a strong musical background. |
| P3 | I feel more confident knowing I have a bank of exercise to help with problems (e.g. owl hooting for helping to pitch higher note, throwing and catching notes etc.) I felt less self-conscious with these exercises as the week progressed. |
| P4 | More confident - Yes. Keep it simple but quality. More aware of analogies to use e.g. 'Imagine you are....' Really helpful. |
| P5 | YES! Will no longer say something is beyond their ability before even starting / trying. Great warm up games / ideas gotten to use in classroom. |
| P6 | Yes, I do feel more confident to teach singing in a more dynamic and focuses way. Reinforced and linked to my instrumental background. |
| P7 | Yes, definitely more confident and enthused about teaching singing (and even starting a school choir) |
| P8 | Yes more confident. I know it's okay to draw rainbows / circles of indicate long notes. I always thought I was doing it completely wrong. Happy to hear this is okay! |
| P9 | Yes I do feel more confident. Even having the songs that I know will work and that I can now break down to teach the children. Encouraged me to try new pieces myself. |
| P10 | Yes – more confident. |
| P11 | Yes I feel more confident but it has encouraged me to get back and learn how to read music |
| P12 | More confident – will use with small groups. Can use with my active children for physical work – hula-hoop, doh-re-me etc. |
| P13 | My confidence in helping children to sing has grown. I can see how to layout beat, rhythm + melody when teaching. I've also seen how to improve intonation and explore scale singing. |
| P14 | Somewhat still feel own musical knowledge is below that of other participants. |
| P15 | Yes! And no! Yes because I have resources of songs, no because I realised I'm not as good of a singer as I thought! |
| P16 | Yes I feel more confident. Though I play piano I'm not a confident singer but I now feel like I can use piano less while teaching. |
| P17 | More confident – Yes! Definitely as regard the teaching of singing as a musical instrument as opposed to simply teaching song. I'll start to use sol-fa and notation in the class now. |
| P18 | Yes. More confident definitely. Seeing how to break a piece down and teach it bit by bit. |
| P19 | Yes. Can see ease of teaching by ear first, then adding sheets of words/ music. Can see how simple songs can be developed into more extensive performance pieces. |

Table 11.4 Has your mindset on importance of singing in the classroom or whole school changed? YES/NO? Please elaborate

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | Very important. Loved the comment from one boy about singing when he's upset about something. Singing such a great de-stressor, breathing focussing. It also promotes group and class spirit. |
| P2 | Singing is vital! Benefits are immeasurable, both for pleasure and as a learning tool. I use it to offer instructions to younger classes to regain attention and for children with specific learning needs. Highly useful for schools where Tumoideachas (total immersion) is in place! |
| P3 | I strongly believe that singing should be a daily activity in the classroom. I also love the idea of 6 th class having the opportunity to hear younger classes singing. |
| P4 | Singing in the classroom and whole school important – Yes!! |
| P5 | Yes. For some children this is their escape moment to shine. Caters for all types of learners. |
| P6 | Yes. Extremely important to use singing as part of a whole-school approach to learning (+ music education in general!) |
| P7 | Yes – singing v. important to children in class – improves concentration, increases confidence, lifts the mood etc., etc. |
| P8 | Singing in classroom is important. I work in learning support / resource so don't have my own class. I do work with choir though. |
| P9 | Yes classroom singing is extremely important can be integrated and is the only subject that is completely cross-curricular. |
| P10 | Yes – lets sing. I love singing anyway but more confident to tackle unknown pieces / different language pieces – as I do not read music. |
| P11 | So many ideas and so important to get children singing everyday in the classroom also content appropriate for a whole school assembly. |
| P12 | Yes. |
| P13 | Singing has always been important to me. If my students knew the words and could sing with the CD I was pleased. However, now I feel challenged to do more a cappella pieces and offer more constructive help with melody and rhythm...I will definitely enable the child to perform more unique pieces which may challenge / encourage other teachers in the school to do so. If 6 th class boys can sing surely the younger, less reserved, boys can do too! |
| P14 | Yes, would have felt this anyway. |
| P15 | I always have thought it important. |
| P16 | Very important. I teach in ASD setting and find music very therapeutic for the children (and me!) on a daily basis. Even if non-verbal children don't sing, they enjoy listening to songs and joining in with actions. I've had children with poor expressive language become more communicative through signing also. |
| P17 | I always sang in the classroom and encouraged the children to do so. |
| P18 | Singing in the classroom is so important, Yes. What I've realised this week however, is that a <u>whole school approach</u> is essential to succeed. You need the support of principal and all classroom teachers. I feel a challenge lies here. |
| P19 | Yes. It used to be an integral part of schooling – when did it disappear? How, now, do we revive singing at school? Yes it's very important, relaxing and invigorating for kids. One teacher at a time! Simple, relevant songs. |

Table 11.5 Will your school benefit from you taking this course? If so, how?

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | I have definitely benefitted from the course. I have really enjoyed it. I will bring the ideas with me into the new term. |
| P2 | Benefited hugely, both as a teacher, and member of an adult liturgical choir. I have already shared ideas with choir director, based on principles of movement and vocal exercises. |
| P3 | I think my school would benefit hugely from an in-service purely in singing as the staff are generally divided into those who can 'do music' or not! The Voiceworks books are available but unused as teachers without a background in music feel a lack of confidence. |
| P4 | Did you and your school benefit from course? Yes, I did and now I need to implement what I've learned and encourage others. |
| P5 | Perform at assembly. Great ideas for choir. |
| P6 | I definitely think they will benefit from doing this course. |
| P7 | Yes – hope the school will benefit – as we will pass on knowledge to other teachers and intend to show them how to teach singing. |
| P8 | Yes I think school will benefit as I am looking forward to trying these songs, more harmonies, warm-ups and the tips for improving intonation etc. with them. |
| P9 | Yes as I will be taking over choir this year and will use my experience of this course to help with that and integrate singing into the everyday running of my class. |
| P10 | Yes will try and implement some activities – warm-up pieces – get voiceworks book – point me in right direction. |
| P11 | Huge bank of ideas for the whole school as well as showing how well they work. |
| P12 | I will benefit as never thought to use in learning support but can see where I can use with various children and how it would benefit them. |
| P14 | I feel I have but think I would face a lot of resistance from other teachers who would find music difficult themselves. I delivered a CPD session last year & staff received it well but this was only 1 1/2 hours and difficult to fit in much. There's a lot of area for improvement & teachers are so so busy – it's hard. |
| P15 | Yes, I have benefitted from the course because it has brought some of my knowledge back, e.g. key of pieces etc. Yes my school will have benefitted because we are going to start a choir. |
| P16 | School will certainly benefit – I and another teacher will be taking 2 nd – 6 th class every week for choir once a week and feel this course will help me greatly! |
| P17 | The children asked could be start a "singing club" next year so I think I'll be brave enough to give it a go now. There are enough games and fun songs to keep them interested. |
| P18 | Yes, my school and I will benefit from this course. I now have a repertoire that I am happy to take back and teach to the choir. The course has energised me, in that I am taking back new material and new methodologies. |
| P19 | Yes, I work in several schools and I'll be ensuring each group I teach will have a happy, engaging and educational experience of singing in the classroom. |

Table 11.6 Are you interested in keeping in touch with this group?

| | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | I would be interested in keeping in touch. We could share resources maybe via Facebook groups. I would be interested in hearing about any teaching opportunities that may come up through music generation if it gets going in North Dublin or Creative Ireland. |
| P2 | Would love to keep in touch! It would be a fantastic means of sharing ideas and awareness of events, or even as a means of organising choir exchanges! |
| P3 | It would be really helpful to stay in touch as a group; I'm really interested in the idea of being part of a pilot group. |
| P4 | Keep in touch as a group? – Yes. |
| P5 | I would love to hear how things have gone/worked for certain class levels/schools choirs. |
| P6 | I definitely think we should keep in touch as a group for the future, particularly with the Creative Ireland five-year plan in mind. I think that best way to keep in touch would be through a Facebook page. |
| P7 | Yes would love to stay in touch – for support and to meet in a few months maybe on a Saturday morning for a few hours. |
| P8 | Yes would be keen to keep in touch as a group. |
| P9 | Keeping in touch would be great. I think even to sing as a choir. Have really enjoyed singing with our little choir. |
| P10 | Yes think it's good to support each other, can be tough if establishing choir on own. |
| P11 | Great course – thank you. <i>(Drew smiley face)</i> |
| P12 | Yes Facebook group would be great. |
| P14 | Would like to but wouldn't be able to give a big time commitment as I'm already involved in a few other voluntary endeavours in other areas |
| P15 | Yes! Left email on page. |
| P16 | Yes would love to keep in touch – great to have group for support/ideas/techniques etc. |
| P17 | Yes! |
| P18 | I am happy to keep in touch as a group. It would be very beneficial in terms of sharing ideas / repertoire. It can be very isolating if you are the driving force behind an initiative but few people in your school are as interested. |
| P19 | Yes. |

Table 11.7 Any other comments?

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | I had heard a lot about Mary Amond O'Brien via Cór na nÓg and NCC and I really enjoyed working with her this week. I loved the way she interacted so well with the children and enjoyed them and got so much out of them. Best of luck with your masters Mary! |
| P2 | Loved the emphasis on using and developing the head voice!! Fantastic ideas for achieving this in a manner that children enjoy and overall, the course was hugely empowering!! |
| P4 | Amazing course – so enlightening and wonderful to be part of a choir with other teachers. I'm so used to being the teacher / conductor and it was so nice to be on the other side. Gave me a whole new perspective. Thanks so much. <i>(Drew smiley face)</i> |
| P5 | I would love to do this course again. Having the children was such an asset to this course – real life experience. Super week. |
| P6 | I wasn't able to record our songs today. These recordings could be shared on the Facebook page and pics of book titles etc. I would really appreciate that. Thanks again. It was a pleasure! <i>(Drew smiley face and the head of a person singing with notes beside them)</i> |
| P8 | Great course. Really enjoyed it. Hope to see your choir perform at some stage in the future. Thanks very much. <i>(Drew smiley face)</i> |
| P10 | I think we should set up a teacher's choir!! I really enjoyed this week. Thanks. |
| P11 | Great course. Thank you. |
| P14 | I enjoyed the course & learned a lot. However I don't think I'd be able to recommend it to the teachers in my school who would need music DPD as I think they would be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of things referenced that would be new to them and feel they can't sing. I think if Creative Ireland strategy is to work, it's these teachers we need to target for their own development & musical knowledge so they can pass this on to the children in their classroom. |
| P15 | Many thanks Mary, best of luck with your masters. You deserve and A! |
| P16 | Thoroughly enjoyed the course – found it very useful and practical. Having the children come in was a super idea also! Thanks. <i>(Drew smiley face)</i> |
| P17 | It was a great course. Thank you! |
| P18 | I <u>loved</u> this course. It was practical and useful. I got some great ideas for teaching singing to my class and choir. I am looking forward to taking the ideas back in September. It was great to get to know the resources also. I also just really enjoy singing! Thanks Mary! |
| P19 | Thank you Mary and Imelda for a really super course. I learned so much and got answers to many questions I had on vocal development, and more! Congratulations – you knew your stuff inside out first!! |

Participant three, seven, nine, twelve, thirteen had no further comments

Appendix 12

Summer course department of education and skills evaluation

1. I achieved the stated learning outcomes of this course.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 16 | 3 | | | |

2. This course was professionally enabling and relevant to the work of schools.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 19 | | | | |

3. This course has improved my teaching or leadership skills.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 16 | 3 | | | |

4. The tutor ably led the learning and ensured there were good levels of engagement.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 19 | | | | |

5. The tutor provided me with appropriate feedback on my assignments/activities and tasks. (One participant did not answer this question)

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 14 | 5 | | | |

6. The course was well structured and effectively managed.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 16 | 3 | | | |

7. This course made meaningful links with the school self-evaluation and information and communications technology

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 11 | 8 | | | |

8. This course was of good quality.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 19 | | | | |

Any further suggestions to improve the quality of this course:

| |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No – great quality course. Hugely relevant content to suit all levels of primary school. Really enjoyed. Thank you! |
| Brilliant – really informative & enjoyable week! |
| This course was extremely useful for both in class teaching and school choir |
| An excellent training, key to its success was skills of trainers and participation of children who sang from local schools. |
| Enhance use of digital tools for music. Better balance between more melodic / developed harmonies and multicultural call + response style songs for very proficient school choirs. Thank you for sharing your gifts. |
| Further support for teachers personal musical theory and knowledge. |
| What would you do with absolute beginners. Sample plan/goals for year in music |
| Fantastic. Thank you Mary! |
| Just keep rolling it out. All teachers need training like this! Thank you. |
| This was an excellent course! Very practical and inspiring. It is easily linked to my own teaching and will definitely inform it next year. |
| No room for improvement, great course. |
| Mary was fabulous facilitator of the course |

Appendix 13

Summer course follow-up one participant responses

Table 13.1 How often do you use singing in the classroom?

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 and P2 | Once a week, half-hour session (<i>participants 1 and 2 jointly completed the first follow-up reflection document</i>) |
| P3 | I am a learning support teacher so not very frequently in a classroom setting. I occasionally will assist classes in the run up to performances and run the school choir on a weekly basis. |
| P4 | I teach pre-instrumental music to Junior and Senior Infants after-school twice a week. A large part of the class is singing. I teach them songs, we play singing games, I use singing and games to teach them concepts such as beat, rhythm and pitch. I would estimate 75% of the class time is singing. |
| P5 | Weekly – in choir (this year I am not a classroom teacher) |
| P6 | Usually, twice a week for 20-30 minutes. In the month leading up to Christmas/Confirmation, we would rehearse every day. |
| P7 | Every week. I incorporate it into my Irish lessons as well as my music lessons. At least 2-3 times per week if possible. |
| P8 | 2/3 times a week. Sometimes as just a break between lessons. Daily in the run up to Christmas. |
| P9 | I use singing every day! As an attention grabber, giving instruction mainly. Sometime struggle to find time to teach songs during a loaded curriculum. |
| P10 | Every day, Mon – Friday |
| P11 | 2/3 days a week (1.5 hours in total) |

Table 13.2 Do you feel more confident in singing in the classroom?

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 and P2 | Yes definitely |
| P3 | I wouldn't necessarily say more confident singing but I think that I am <u>teaching</u> singing in a better way than before. |
| P4 | I feel confident singing in the class-room because I am a singer. I decided to do the 'Let the Children Sing' class in order to learn some new material, meet other people working with primary school children to see what I could learn from them, and because I had heard so much about Mary through her involvement in teaching teachers for the National Children's Choir programme and her work with Cor na nOg and I wanted to see her in action! |
| P5 | Yes |
| P6 | Yes, I feel I have more useful techniques to offer (e.g. hooting owl to help children with higher notes, pronunciation of words) |
| P7 | Yes! Just go for it. Its ok if it's not perfect - trial and error in learning a song is ok. |
| P8 | I absolutely do. I am using a lot of what I learned during the summer course particularly in terms of physicality and 'feeling' the music. |
| P9 | Yes I always loved it but see how much children in 2 nd respond better to songs and are so enthusiastic at the chance to sing. Mesmerised by teacher's instructions through song. Always brings a smile from them. |
| P10 | Yes. |
| P11 | Absolutely. I have become involved in the school choir and my confidence has grown teaching children songs and techniques of singing since taking part in the course. |

Table 13.3 What has encouraged you to feel this way?

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 and P2 | Practise on the course. Hearing other success stories, such as the woman from the playschool who taught singing to very young children. |
| P3 | Passing on to the children some of the things I learned about pronunciation, 'surprise' breaths, phrasing and techniques for hitting difficult intervals. |
| P4 | Confidence at singing in the classroom is not an issue for me. However, I am more encouraged after taking the course because I learned some new material and I was encouraged by the fact that much of what I did was being done by Imelda (<i>Reflective practitioner</i>) who often works with similar age children to those I worked with and the course reinforced the idea I had that singing and music is so important to children and that it can bring so much happiness and joy into their lives in the classroom and is a wonderful way to introduce them to a broader musical life. |
| P5 | Better warm up activities and ideas from the course we did. |
| P6 | Seeing the singing lessons and techniques modelled daily for a week. Because the course was full of active learning I find I can recall most of what we did without having to look back on the notes. |
| P7 | I have also way more ways of accessing songs and helping the "non-singers" to access songs. Good warm ups. |
| P8 | My experience during the summer course. |
| P9 | I've been leading choir in the school too. Great use of rhythm sticks and paint brushing. So effective for teaching technique. Would love even more magic tricks! Struggle a bit with piano accompaniment. Would love to access more. |
| P10 | Picked up lots of tips at Mary's training. Learned some great songs I've used with many different classes. |
| P11 | Having learned techniques and observing the teaching of a choir during the course. |

Table 13.4 Have you explored new repertoire using the techniques learnt over the summer course.

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 and P2 | Yes! As we have been using the Junior Voiceworks material. |
| P3 | Yes. I've used the techniques listed above with the choir. |
| P4 | Yes some new repertoire. Some of the rep was slightly more advanced than I would do with infants but some that I would not have thought suitable turned out to work quite well so it made me challenge them a little and do more advanced material. |
| P5 | Yes. |
| P6 | I introduced my class to Banaha and In the Bleak Midwinter from Voiceworks. |
| P7 | Yes! In class I did Honk honk. In choir we have covered the Scooby doo song and Zulu Warrior. |
| P8 | I have indeed. |
| P9 | NA |
| P10 | Yes, lots of new songs from Sherlock Series, YouTube, Sarah Watts books and the Sing Up website. |
| P11 | I have started using the terminology taught to us during the course. The most beneficial part for me was being able to refer back to the course if children were struggling with a part of the song it was good to be able to reflect on what was done during the course to overcome this problem. |

Appendix 14

Summer course follow-up two participant responses

Participants who did not complete the second follow-up reflection document are marked NFR, no form received. Unanswered questions are marked NA, not answered.

Table 14.1 Did you complete the task? YES/NO. If no, please elaborate.

| | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P1 | Yes. |
| P2 | Yes. |
| P3 | Yes. |
| P4 | NFR |
| P5 | Yes. |
| P6 | Yes. |
| P7 | NA (<i>Answer in Table 2 below concludes they did complete the task</i>) |
| P8 | NA (<i>Answer in Table 2 below concludes they did complete the task</i>) |
| P9 | NFR |
| P10 | Yes. |
| P11 | Yes. |
| P12 | Yes. |
| P13 | Yes. |
| P14 | Yes. |

Table 14.2 If you answered yes describe what it was you did for the performance.

Please elaborate where possible on specific or general music or non-music related experiences of the overall facilitation and performance process.

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| P1 | <i>(PI co-taught and conducted with P2 for the Christmas concert).</i> It was very successful and both the children and audience enjoyed our efforts. We kept our performance very simple. All singing in unison! We performed Scooby Doo and Duck Dance from our course and. We then mixed it up with an Irish song, Daidi na Nollag and Jingle bell rock for Christmas. |
| P2 | <i>(PI co-taught and conducted with P2 for the Christmas concert).</i> Duck Dance and Scooby Doo Song to 1 st Classes (38 Children). Performed for our whole school and then for the parents in school hall. Children were very confident on stage, as we had been singing with them from September – December. |
| P3 | I taught and led the school choir in a performance in our winter concert. We sang ‘Naughty’ from Matilda. I tried out some of the concepts I had learned from the course with regard to the pronunciation of certain letters, ways to practice tricky intervals and ‘surprise breaths’. It was satisfying to see these things making a positive difference. |
| P4 | <i>(Answered at the bottom of the November document received after Christmas)</i> I am working on the Red Riding Hood rap with my Senior Infants group that was recommended to me on the course. There are some tricky rhythmical elements and I have been trying to use stamping and clicking to help them get those right. It’s a little bit of a struggle for the children to not sing/speak during my call elements because they are getting to know it all so well and I might split them into two groups with one group calling and the other responding when they know it well enough. The stamping/clicking is maybe not going too well but I find they model the rhythm I sing anyway. However, I was very impressed by how well Mary used the stamping/clicking and clapping to teach difficult rhythmical elements to the children during the course and this is something that I would like to develop more in my own classes so I will keep at it. |
| P5 | <i>(Answered at the bottom of the November document received after Christmas)</i> We did do a choir performance before Christmas and we used some of the techniques you taught to get the children ready. I didn’t journal anything. |
| P6 | I prepared and conducted the school Christmas concert, which involved 15 hymns, some unison, some two-part, and some solo. The choir was all boys and there were approximately 360 students. I organised a smaller choir through auditions and this group sang a piece a cappella and also sang descant part for some of the pieces. For me the most challenging parts of the experience were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having limited rehearsal time with the pianist, so the children were not very familiar with the intros and were not 100% confident about which piece was coming next (!) 2. Adjusting the sound system for correct balance 3. Keeping eye contact and physical communication with a choir that size 4. Helping the choir get back in tune during a piece if they started to go flat (e.g., In the chorus of O Holy Night, if some of them started on B flat instead of C I couldn’t manage to get them back in tune unless we stopped or started again) 5. Helping the children stay connected with the melody of the pieces. A lot of the boys had little experience of singing and a tendency to chant rather than sing, especially for pieces with a strong rhythm like Carol of the Bells. |

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| P7 | We learnt Scrooge from a Muppets Christmas Carol for the play. It was a fun piece full of characterisation and made for great staging. However it was not the easiest piece to teach. Timing is tough and there is a section which many children found it very difficult to sing in unison. However it did not deter me. We did lots and lots of vocal drills. In some parts I had to hold kids hands and sing while looking into their eyes. It took 3 weeks but we managed it. We broke the song down into parts and did part by part then added dramatization and characterisation to the song. The Chairperson and Principal commented on what great singers my class are after their performance, “powerful singers”. I’ll take that as a win!! |
| P8 | I taught ‘The Winter Song’ by Sara Bareilles and Ingrid Michaelson for Christmas performances and a competition. I have been teaching the choir since 2009 but I NEVER would have had the confidence to enter a competition before the summer course. |
| P9 | NFR |
| P10 | Taught a class (mixed 4 th -6 th class) the song Titanium (their choice) and taught a class (mixed 2 nd /3 rd mixed class) the song One Call Away (also their choice) for a rural school Christmas Concert performance. The first challenge was to ensure the children understood the meaning of the words to these two songs and to provide a child friendly interpretation of them, e.g. Titanium – in school, maybe people put others down, so how to be strong and resist this and show strength of character. With One Call Away, to realise there are people in life who can help us when we need help and not to be afraid to reach out to them, or to give help to others. We used a mixture of singing with a YouTube lyrics video with backing track; singing without music, with me leading and just using the words displayed on the interactive whiteboard, to ensure accuracy and clarity; then using a karaoke backing track with the words displayed; and finally the backing track but no words when they’d learned them off by heart. With the younger group they also made up their own actions to the song, which I facilitated as part of the learning process. They thought this enhanced their performance and I agree that it did. At the Christmas concert performance I led the two choir groups with a backing track and they performed very well. I mouthed the words and in the case of the younger group did the actions while conducting and it helped them stay focussed and attentive. |
| P11 | Taught “Hark how the bells” for a Christmas performance. This song involved using “surprise breath”. |
| P12 | We learned the Frosty morning piece from Voiceworks (Rhythms with no melody). Children clapped rhythm first. We covered the rhythm in sections and moved from claps to words. Eventually I gave out the sheets and they loved “cracking the code” of reading music. |
| P13 | Turning on the Christmas lights in Ballymun we learned 7 songs. They performed outside in the Axis for their parents and members of the community. |
| P14 | I work with a choir group one day per week after school for one hour (as I am working in SEN this is my only contact with the group and the only time I teach music at the moment). I prepared the children for a Christmas carol performance in the local park Friday markets. We sang three songs-including a Christmas medley, O Holy Night & Somewhere Only We Know. For this performance we were accompanied by a CD player with an amp. We usually practice with CDs unless working with the choir teacher who comes in weekly and works with different groups, he accompanies them on piano). Performance was ok but children were very shy and sound didn’t carry well out doors. At the second performance we sang for the Christmas Eve Children’s Mass. This was a formal mass and we sang a range of songs-all ‘holy’. The choir I was working with was joined by other children from 4 th , 5 th and 6 th classes. For songs, which had two parts, the (after school) choir sang the harmonies and the other group sang the melody line. This formal performance was accompanied by the choir teacher and conducted by myself (& another teacher, usually two teachers when there is a harmony). |

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| <p>P14 Cont'd</p> | <p>Two songs we introduced this year for the first time which went well were 'Don Oíche Úd i mBeithil, and Night of Silence/ Silent Night. Performance went well but had some issues when communion was served to the choir mid-song.</p> <p>We had another formal performance- one which we had been working towards since September. This was the Laudate performance, which was the last week on January. It involves 12- 15 schools practicing separately and coming together for one practice before a performance. The performance was to celebrate Catholic Schools Week. This went well but we learned last year that we were the only school to do the harmonies for the songs and so this year we taught the harmonies to the entire group so they would carry against the other school. The performance went well and the children performed to their best on the night. Particular favourites of the children included: May the Road Rise & Dona Nobis</p> <p>The children join the choir on a voluntary basis but are asked to attend all practices as much as possible and commit. There were approx. 45 children in the choir at the beginning of the year and this dropped to about 38 in the New Year (mostly because of clashes with other after school activities). The children are well behaved and enthusiastic. They don't know each other so are generally quite shy at singing out initially.</p> |
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Table 14.3 Seven months have passed since the summer course. Has your confidence in relation to facilitating group singing increased as a result of participating in the course? Yes / No (Please elaborate)

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| P1 | Yes my confidence has increased. I realise starting something is better than waiting for perfection. |
| P2 | I would not have attempted to teach a choir prior to the course. |
| P3 | Yes. I think that learning the above techniques have improved my skill in facilitating group singing. |
| P4 | NFR |
| P5 | NFR |
| P6 | Yes. I still use the notes from the course and I feel more empowered knowing that I have a few techniques to try out. I'm also more confident feeling that I don't have to perform perfect singing for the class before we sing together. |
| P7 | NFR |
| P8 | NFR |
| P9 | NFR |
| P10 | Yes, I've used lots of the songs we learned and as I move around quite a number of schools, these songs have been spread far and wide around Co Sligo! The most important tip was to know the song thoroughly before teaching, as I got better at teaching the songs; the more frequently I repeated them with different groups. Use of actions and gestures to help emphasize certain notes or phrases is important in my teaching too. I feel more confident as I am more experienced and have witnessed the final product in terms of a performance and I was happy with that. I found two part harmonies challenging unless another adult can support one of the groups. I'm improving on this in part due to song selection and in my ability to move as a conductor from one group to another to help keep them on track. The children find it hard to stick to their own line and not fall in with the other group's melody. |
| P11 | Absolutely!! Things I would have found difficult to teach before I now feel I have the terminology and ideas to get around the issue. |
| P12 | Yes. I can teach things not starting from the start. We cover small sections then build up over time (days). They love tonic sol-fa with hand signals. |
| P13 | Yes our choir has grown to 69 students, which feel a lot more confident in leading. |
| P14 | Yes. I learned a huge bank of warm-ups, which the children enjoy. I have learned tips on how to teach a new song including teaching tricky rhythms. |

Table 14.4 Have the techniques demonstrated during the workshops and/or summer course empowered you more to facilitate group singing? (Please elaborate)

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| P1 | Yes. I can tackle the words of the song in the rhythm of the song. |
| P2 | Yes – the warm up activities were helpful e.g. breathing, talking high and low, chanting etc. |
| P3 | No. I facilitate singing the same amount as before but I think I do it better. |
| P4 | NFR |
| P5 | NFR |
| P6 | Yes. I learned a lot from observing Mary’s pace with the children. She demonstrated how important it is to keep the children actively engaged through changing focus on lyrics, pronunciation, having fun with words, using gestures, improvisation etc. I have found that the best group singing in my class happens when there is as little instruction as possible and most of the lesson is spent singing. |
| P7 | NA |
| P8 | NA |
| P9 | NFR |
| P10 | Yes, I see the value of short accessible songs being taught before tackling more challenging melodies. Building the children’s confidence brings out the best in their ability. Choice of song and its appropriateness to the group is important. Use of gestures and eye contact really assists the singers. Warm-ups can be a lot of fun. The importance of effective breathing and engaging the stomach muscles to support the sound have proven very valuable learning when in the classroom. Placing children struggling to maintain a melody with strong singers for support helps them. |
| P11 | Yes. I feel I don’t need to be a “pro” to teach music. Simple effective ideas that are child friendly have become a toolkit for me and they really engage the children. |
| P12 | Yes, explained in Q3. (Table No. 36 above) |
| P13 | Yes I feel more confident and that I have new tools and techniques for teaching new songs. |
| P14 | Yes. I may have shied away from songs with different language lyrics or tricky rhythms but when I saw how quickly the group of students picked up these songs I was more open to giving them a go. I also liked to see that conducting in a non-formal way is okay. |

Table 14.5 Moving forward what shape or direction would you like to see the summer course take if it is to take place again in 2018? Are there particular challenges or techniques you would like to explore that you would benefit from?

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| P1 | I would like it to be varied for all age groups. Material appropriate for older and younger classes. |
| P2 | I would like it to be similar to last year. Learning a song before attempting to teach it is a great help. Watching how Mary worked with the children was an inspiration. |
| P3 | Teaching older children how to sing in their head voice rather than chest voice. Techniques for children who have big difficulty with pitch. Learning lots of different songs as part of the course is really good also. |
| P4 | NFR |
| P5 | NFR |
| P6 | I would love to introduce some more opportunities for improvisation with my class as they really struggle with confidence in this area. So if we learned some new ways to improvise in group singing that would be great, and fun! |
| P7 | NA |
| P8 | NA |
| P9 | NFR |
| P10 | I'd be interested in working with a group of young singers again like last year, but getting the opportunity to teach them/lead them in a song and be mentored by Mary on technique. It would also be useful to video this process to review and learn from it during the course. I feel I've taken up many tips Mary shared last year, but how much actually translates into action is hard to objectively judge. This would be the value of being observed! It would also be an opportunity to eliminate techniques that aren't working and are just bad habits!! I also would like to learn more on helping children to sing out, especially children in classes where they aren't that interested in singing and/or are inhibited by it. I find the senior classes sometimes sing like 'mice' into their throats rather than 'lions' projecting their voices and I start to sound repetitive in my encouragements to sing out. I cover the important warm-ups and they may well sing out for fun/short songs, but then their "performance song" can come across a bit flat. I found the resource recently published with samples of song selection for the primary sector very useful, but it's a challenge to wean the older classes off popular media supported songs. |
| P11 | I would be happy for the summer course to be of a similar level as last year. |
| P12 | I really enjoyed the course last year. I'd love warming ups or starting off ideas. I don't like to go straight into singing pieces and struggle for ideas. |
| P13 | I would like something similar, as I'm still not very confident in reading music. |
| P14 | I liked the format of the summer course last year. There were lots of songs, tips and techniques taught in it and I got a lot out of it. Seeing Mary work with a real school choir was fantastic. |