Moving On Evaluation

**In 2010 MusicLeader West Midlands and Youth Music identified the need for a professional development programme designed for advanced music practitioners, who were working in early years settings. The result was ‘Moving On’ the seminar series**

In 2009, Youth Music’s Regional Executive Officer for the West Midlands and MusicLeader West Midlands undertook some informal consultation in the area of Early Years music-making and continuing professional development.

They found the following:

* There was a need to raise the quality, value and impact of music leadership within this setting in the region
* The majority of music projects delivered offered staff training and development for the small numbers of employed staff working in settings, however a relatively small pool of experienced early years musicians was being employed in the field
* The majority of CPD for the sector was pitched at entry-level (e.g. songs and activity ideas). Musicians and Early Years practitioners highlighted a lack of in-depth theoretical training to equip musicians with the underpinning knowledge for their work
* Early Years managers found that musicians were not always able to articulate the role of music-making in terms of linking to child development, the Early Years Foundation Stage and wider skills acquisition, which is important for demonstrating the value of the work

**Moving On: Professional Development in Early Years**,was a programme designed to meet these needs

The aim of the programme was to provide early years practitioners, music leaders and community musicians with an opportunity to extend knowledge, skills and understanding of how to work in music with young children, to equip them to meet the challenges and expectations of the sector.

Local and regional specialists and organisations were invited to partner, contribute and offer their experience to the programme.

Five topics were dealt with across five individual seminar days held around the West Midlands region:

1. Pedagogies - Looking at different philosophies and approaches
2. Progression and musicality
3. Singing and songs
4. Performing and listening
5. Drama, story and movement with music

MusicLeader West Midlands commissioned Dr. Alison Street as the lead trainer for the series; with the remit of identifying appropriate contributions and workshop leaders for each topic, Alison was also commissioned to write an evaluation of the series.

This evaluation report is commissioned by MusicLeader West Midlands, and is written by Dr Alison Street and Erika Baker, Director of MusicLeader West Midlands, with contributions from workshop leaders and participants involved with Moving On.

This evaluation report was authored by Dr Alison Street, with contributions from Erika Baker, and trainers and participants from the programme. It was commissioned as part of the Spotlighting project funded by Youth Music.

**Overall Aim**

The Moving On programme was made possible as part of the Youth Music spotlight programme.

The aim of the Moving On programme was to provide Early Years practitioners, music leaders and community musicians with an opportunity to extend knowledge, skills and understanding of how to work in music with young children, to equip them to meet the challenges and expectations of the sector.

**Intended Outcomes**

* To build on participants’ existing knowledge and experiences to develop their understanding of theoretical foundations of making music with under-fives;
* To enhance awareness of the relevance of music to support young children’s development, and of how young children develop musically;
* To develop and share effective practice;
* To develop a reflective questioning approach to EY musical practice.

**Activities**

Five one-day seminars took place in the West Midlands between October 2010 and May 2011. These were led by experienced presenters, teachers and academics in the field. Each seminar day comprised two keynote presentations, followed by discussion, workshops run by local music leaders and evaluation and reflection sessions. The Youth Music Spotlighting initiative encouraged ongoing documentation and recording of sessions, and three music leaders became music ‘champions’, kept reflective logs throughout the year, documented their own practice and tracked the progress of their thinking and learning.

This document gives information about:

* How the content of the seminar series was structured;
* The participants who attended;
* How the seminars built on the existing knowledge of participants, with reflections from participants and providers;
* How the seminars explored musical development with reflections from participants and providers;
* How the series shared effective practice, with reflections from participants and providers;
* How the series encouraged a reflective, questioning approach, with reflections from three Spotlight ‘champions’.

It concludes with implications for future CPD provision.

**Evaluation methodology**

Prior to the start of the Moving On series, it was discussed with all partners that due to the longer term nature of the programme, over a six month period, it was important to capture the journey made by participants.

It was agreed that this would be done by using a Reflection Tool, to be used at the start of first session, to highlight where practitioners were starting from, and to encourage them to consider their personal learning objectives. We also suggested that practitioners attending across the series might like to reconsider the first sentence at the end of the programme, to see if their views had changed.

This is what we asked the attendees:

 As of October 2010, for me being an early year’s practitioner is about...

*Repeat this question at the end of the programme, circa May 2011.*

 Your objective

 1.        What do you want to achieve from the course?

2.        What do you want to achieve from the 1st session?

3.        How will you know you have achieved these goals?

4.        What would be the impact of achieving these goals?

 Your Learning Journey: as you ‘move on’

1.        Thinking about the individual sessions, or the programme as a whole what questions are raised in

* how you think about your learning
* how you think about your practice?

2.        In relation to your practice are there things you would like to do differently? Or areas you want to develop further?

3.        How might you use this course to help you implement these changes/ developments?

4.        Outside of the seminars, how will you reflect and act on your learning?

5.        As a support tool, we suggest that you complete a learning log to help document your progress. In addition to this log, how might you record your journey throughout the course and beyond?

6.        Are there are any additional things you will need to put in place to support this learning process?

In order to track progression, it was decided that we would ask the same evaluation questions at the end of each session, with the intention of being able to create a wider picture at the end of the series.

These are the questions asked:

Evaluation at end of session:

 1.        What have you learned about yourself during the course of the day?

2.        What were the things that stuck out for you most today?

3.        What if anything will you do differently as a result of today?

4.        What would you like to see more/less of during the remainder of the series?

5.        What will you take away from the session?

6.        What will you leave behind?

7.        What would you say to someone considering attending this course.

At the start of the programme participants were notified of the spotlight programme, and were asked if they would like to get involved.

It was explained that the aim was to focus on various projects in order to gain a deeper insight into Early Years music making and how it can best be supported. They were notified about the set of ‘ingredients’ which outlined the key elements of a successful Early Years music making environment it was made clear that as part of the evaluation we wanted to investigate how they work through our chosen spotlight projects.

As the Moving On Seminar series was to spotlight CPD, being aware of what learning the participants found most valuable during these sessions offered the opportunity to help us to develop other effective programmes in the future. An additional benefit was that we would be able to use this information to encourage other Early Years practitioners to engage with CPD.

We asked the group if the wanted to take part in this national Early Years music-making learning and evaluation, we specified that 2-4 people would become our Early Years CPD champions, and that would involve the following:

* Keeping a video or written diary of your experience and progress during the Moving On seminar series
* Recording video footage of you implementing what you’ve learnt in your setting

Youth Music’s Early Years Music Making ingredients highlighted the following as a focus for the Moving On spotlight:

* Self-reflection
* Capturing, documenting, reflecting, valuing
* Commitment to CPD in music

When asking the participants to reflect on their experience, we asked them to consider those three elements.

Three music leaders volunteered to get involved: BymWelthy and Tara Murphy volunteered to create a diary of their experience. With Tara creating a written log[[1]](#footnote-1) and video footage of her work with reflection[[2]](#footnote-2). Whilst Bym chose to use a visual method to represent his transition[[3]](#footnote-3). Both can be viewed here[[4]](#footnote-4).

Bym and Tara also volunteered to comment on their experience with Oliver Armstrong in our reflection video. This can be viewed here[[5]](#footnote-5)

The video was shot in July 2011.

The three early years practitioners were asked the following questions:

* What interpersonal qualities do you think are important working in music with children under three?
* What approaches in music education have you found helpful?
* When planning a session, what knowledge of young children’s development do you consider?
* What is important to consider when introducing elements of music making?
  + Singing: Bym talks about ‘space to sing’, whilst Tara talks about ‘appropriate pitch’ and ‘communication with others’. Oliver highlights ‘narrative and story’.
  + Movement: Bym highlights the ‘intertwined journey’; Tara notices ‘children noticing differences’; Oliver highlighted the importance of ‘adults creating space’.
  + Performing & listening: Bym ‘children need to be listened to’; Tara outlined the need to ‘give opportunities to take risks’; whilst Oliver considered the ‘importance of modelling listening’ and ‘joining art forms together’
* Looking back over Moving On, what are the key things you have learned?
  + Oliver ‘theory matters’; for Bym it was ‘music for its own sake’, whilst Oliver highlighted ‘building on children’s musicality’. Tara ‘facilitating communication’

You can see the resulting video here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqX2Q0hlzpU>

**How was the series structured?**

Five focal areas of music education were identified as being crucial to cover in the seminars, in relation to young children’s musical development and how this might be supported. They were explored as follows:

**Seminar 1, Coventry: 15 October, 2010:** **Pedagogy** – and introduction to the series and different approaches and philosophies. This event explored the different philosophies and approaches to working in music with young children. It explored ideas of children playing with music and adults teaching playfully. It considered differences in approaches to working in a range of settings and situations across the birth to age five phase – everything from baby and mother groups to formal sessions in nurseries.

**Seminar 2, Hereford: 25 November:** **Progression** – this discussed a range of research focused on how children can progress musically, and the relationship between children’s development and what, as musicians and practitioners, we can provide in a way that is relevant and interesting and extends their learning.

**Seminar 3, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs: 27 January:** **Singing and Songs** – this focused on singing development and spontaneous song singing, repertoire and how to use songs for different purposes.

**Seminar 4, Birmingham: 10 March:** **Performing and Listening** - this included a range of different experiences and opportunities from performing musicians visiting settings to work with young children, to children performing and listening to instruments, to children listening to recorded music using new technological devices.

**Seminar 5, Shrewsbury/Telford: 12 May: Sound, Space and Story** - as Susan Young pointed out in her rationale, *‘children rarely separate out music from dancing, and moving, from making up stories, from role play. They mix and match their activities constantly, ideas flowing from one to the next in creative transformations’.* This session looked at how time-based performance arts have, at their basis, the very same roots.

Each seminar concluded with a plenary session in which participants were asked to reflect on their thinking and how it might have changed. They were asked:

1. What have you learned about yourself during the course of the day?
2. What were the things that stuck out for you most today?
3. What, if anything, will you do differently as a result of today?
4. What would you like to do more / less of during the remainder of the series?

**Who were the participants?**

Over 125 participants attended the five seminars, and are now engaged in a wider Early Years network in the region via MusicLeader West Midlands. This has therefore increased interest and potential provision in the region, thus addressing the second initial concern highlighted in the Youth Music REO’s regional 2009 consultation.

The table below indicates the figures for each seminar, showing the frequency of attendance for the series:

* 128 total number of places used across the five seminars
* This was made up of 48 different people
* Attendance varied from a single session, to attendance at all 5

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Frequency of attendance** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| 5 seminars [whole series] | 9 | 19% |
| 4 seminars | 6 | 13% |
| 3 seminars | 5 | 10% |
| 2 seminars | 4 | 8% |
| Single seminar | 24 | 50% |

These are the collated data responses from all five seminars. *Please note this does not include the workshop contributors*

* 56% of participants had attended a MusicLeader event before
* 15% of participants were male, 85% female

In terms of their primary role in the previous twelve months, participants categorised themselves as follows:

* 13% classroom teacher
* 12% instrumental teacher
* 31% workshop leader
* 9% project manager
* 5% trainer

The remainder were involved with early years delivery, but not as their principal source of income. This distribution indicates a range of skills, roles and professional backgrounds among participants.

* Course participants who had worked with children aged 0-2 years in the past 12 months = 23%
* Course participants who had worked with children aged 3-5 years in the past 12 months= 31%

It was evident from these figures that a large proportion of all responders work across both age categories.

When asked to specify the usual age group they worked with the responses showed:

* 0-2 years = 5%
* 3-5 years = 49%

This suggests that 46% of attendees are delivering work to other age groups, and that there was comparatively less experience of work with the younger age group of children (0-2 years). This might explain their apparent enthusiasm for the emphasis on the Early Years as well as their requests (as shown in participant feedback to the opening seminar) for more concrete examples of ‘best practice’ and their hunger for both new practical ideas and theoretical links.

**Outcome focused approach**

**Building on existing knowledge**

Each seminar included opportunities for group discussion and feedback. This aimed not only to explore the content of keynote presentations but to elicit reflective questions about how new knowledge could mix with existing assumptions, habits and practical experiences. Knowledge about children’s physical, social and emotional development could then be seen as key to how and what music provision might offer. *‘I just want some new songs and activities… what’s theory got to do with it’?* Young, in her opening keynote, Oct, 2010, challenged us to consider the importance of reflecting on our existing judgements, decisions, values and beliefs; to start with ourselves, our purposes for making music and our notions of professionalism. This implies that this kind of CPD activity is as much about ‘how’ knowledge is processed and extended as it is about ‘what’ the content is. Throughout the series it was thought to be important by the organisers to have lead presenters in the field who would be skilled in challenging assumptions and who could draw on recent research and relevant literature, while maintaining their implications for practical activities.

The importance of raising expectations of professionalism in this field by providing highly skilled leadership training and recognition of the vital role music plays in Early Years contexts have been highlighted by Young, (2007), the Henley report (2011) and by Lonie (2010). The aim of this series was not to promote a framework to fit all CPD circumstances, but rather to recognise the many starting points of the participants and to offer a range of information, experiences and questions that would allow participants to consider their own practice in more depth.

**How participants reflected**

Participants’ feedback suggested they had engaged with the aim of extending knowledge and understanding of theory and approaches.

A selection of their reflections indicates they had learned:

* That I am not alone in my dilemmas of quality vs. quantity
* That I enjoy the theory of music education practice and should take more time out for this!
* Alternative approaches to music with children and babies
* That one size does not fit all
* What I have done through shadowing and developing repertoire has academic terminology!
* There is no one ‘perfect’ or ‘correct’ method of teaching music
* I have more confidence in my abilities as a music practitioner
* Today has affirmed my practice and given me vocabulary to describe my work with children
* That I am more than just a visual / musical artist – I have what it takes to positively influence someone’s life
* Different range of approaches – a valuable toolkit to use in different situations (x4)

What they said they would do differently

* Experiment with a wider range of approaches in my daily work
* More confidence in creative approaches, rather than structured approaches
* Re-evaluate the aims of my practice – what do I want children to get out of the sessions? (x2)
* Get toddlers to explore instruments in more depth
* Add things to my delivery and remember to take stock during sessions
* More use of technology – showing photos and video recordings of previous sessions as a means of informing parents of children’s learning
* I will research the creativity theorists featured today as my personal knowledge in this area is limited
* More recognition of composition and music making as a conversation
* Employ different strategies and approaches based on the nature of groups and contexts within which I work
* I will value what I do more and go back to the theory that underpins my beliefs
* Explore some different ways of using instruments in sessions and allow for more creative playing
* Will consider what I am doing in more depth
* I will listen to the children before jumping in!

**Reflections from the providers**

It is clear that there is a strong need for more in-depth thinking and debate about EY music practice and to develop a professional attitude in the workforce, especially in light of the Tickell review of the EYFS, as ‘managers and other staff in children’s centres are much more experienced now and have higher expectations and understanding of what quality work is‘. However the audience for this series was very wide, and four out of seven ‘providers’ who gave feedback focussed on the difficulties of meeting the disparate aims of participants: ‘Pitching the presentation appropriately to a group of people from very different backgrounds, limited knowledge of who they were, what they were looking to get out of the seminar’. And that it was challenging ‘to balance between patronising old hands OR leaving novices far behind’.

These important points suggest the need for focussed aims and that there may be more appropriate provision of CPD to cater for the different roles and levels of knowledge and understanding of the participants.

**Understanding about young children’s musical development**

It was hoped that EY practitioners and music leaders would develop their understanding of both ways to support musical development and ways that music could enhance children’s development. These complementary viewpoints were used to structure the second seminar in particular, although implicit messages about the relevance of practical activities to children’s development ran as a thread throughout the series. Seminar two explored domains of child development, different theories, e.g. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Gardner, and asked questions about beliefs and methods and the setting up of norms against which children’s progress might be measured. We looked at particular skills from a ‘developmentally appropriate’ point of view. This raised a number of issues, e.g. ‘Do I need to know about these theorists to be able to do music with Early Years’? This was explored in discussion; it emphasised the need for trainers to maintain a careful balance between practical and theoretical understanding, and maintaining a questioning approach that called on both EY practitioners and musicians to answer this from the point of view of their own development needs. As a result of this discussion the following questions were raised for deliberation and consideration at seminar three.

* How do I build on what I notice children/children and parents know and can already do musically?
* What does a young child tell us about their music making - how do we invite them to tell us about it?
* Which open questions can/do I ask children that helps them reflect on what they do musically: why......how......?
* How does a child know they are building on what they know?

**How participants reflected**

On considering aspects of musical development, participants thought they had learned (a selection of views):

* That there is much to learn, a whole expanse in fact. That there is also much to consider with a child, where they might be from, how much they want to play the music you are playing, how they may pick up the music you’ve come to teach.
* That there is still lots of room for questioning what we do and why
* That music-making means taking some risks with your own thinking
* To think what it means for the child
* I have a lot to learn! (and I’m keen to learn it)

What they said they would do differently

* Think outside the box more
* Expect more from early years pupils
* Ask more questions of others – so much experience and knowledge in the room
* Try not to take myself so seriously when teaching music. Relax – feel more confident
* Make sure I always sing with the children on every visit to every setting
* When delivering training to EY practitioners spend a little more time explaining why we are doing that rhyme and what the children are learning
* Think about how people ‘move on’ in their thinking – how we progress ourselves
* Consider progression – using same songs with different year groups
* Consider different developmental strategies
* Reflect more
* Be less ‘structured’, allowing for more ‘organic’ sessions
* Feel more confident

**Reflections from the providers**

There were contrasting views expressed by the same presenter. These corroborate the previous points made about the wide range of skills in the audience.

*‘I detected very diverse requirements amongst attendees at my session. The mix of EY educators and musicians was stimulating but it was quite difficult to meet everyone's needs. The educators' prior knowledge was very different from the musicians'. The musicians tended to come from a paradigm of performance and the educators tended not to. Maybe this is evident from what the two types of people valued from the sessions (feedback) and from comments like "Do we need to know this?"  - a comment from a musician relating to underpinning theory’.* She also reflected that *‘Whilst this diversity is challenging, I also think it is enriching - the musicians learned from the educators and the educators learned from the musicians’.* She spoke of the theoretical sessions as having less immediate appeal but being valuable for their ‘slow release’ benefits. Another presenter commented on the over-formal set up of the room for the keynotes, preferring rather to see faces rather than the ‘backs of heads’, and that her own contribution was anti ‘hi-brow’.These points indicate a dualism in thinking and seem to underline the gulf perceived between theory and practice. They imply the importance of clarifying aims, of setting up environments that are fit for purpose. Making music together playfully will always elicit more positive immediate feedback than more theoretical sessions. Therefore it seems important for CPD to articulate more strongly the relevance of theory to practice and their mutual influence, if it is going to be valuable.

**Developing and sharing effective practice; singing, listening, performing, moving and narrating**

20 contributors presented and attended across the five seminars, in addition to participants. The presence of the workshop leaders and keynote presenters throughout the whole of the seminar day enabled debate on the issues raised and ensured engagement in discussion, as they could act both as facilitators and participants with colleagues. In this way it was possible to create an environment in which ideas could be exchanged in a mutually respectful way, and where expertise could be shared and questions asked. This allowed for a deepening of understanding of conditions which both EY practitioners and musicians find challenging, and of the relevance of practical approaches which might work in these conditions.

The seminars were delivered across the West Midlands region, with a range of host partners, which enabled participants to engage in the variety of approaches, and develop awareness of relevance of activities in a range of local settings across the region. This allowed those with local expertise to extend participants’ existing skills and understanding, and to talk openly about feelings and levels of confidence, aims and objectives in practical approaches with colleagues.

**How participants reflected**

In terms of sharing skills through the seminars and workshops focused on skills of singing, listening, moving and performing, participants felt they had learned:

* My confidence is growing with regard to music, musicality! Alongside my understanding of music – what it means for children and practitioners
* My confidence in speaking / commenting within the group has grown (more each seminar)
* That I need to make more space and time for recording / filming practice as this is an important part of self-reflection
* No matter how great you feel about your practice there is always someone who is going further, deeper, better – they are there to show the way in moments of lack of direction!
* That there are many different valid ways of doing things
* The video clips of successful musical interactions, opportunities with musicians the varied forms they may take
* How important listening is
* What a fantastic experience / exercise the saxophones and live jazz musicians were
* How we are on the same journey and seem to be singing from the same hymn sheet! Lovely to hear Wigmore’s presentation – very honest and refreshing.

What they said they would do differently

* Take more risks
* Look to get performers in
* Seek to video for me (leader) and for them (participants)
* More live music performance
* Have more faith in just going wherever the children want to go, even if I’m doing something unfamiliar
* Find out how to share video more to get others’ opinions on what is captured by the images and sound.
* Encouraging children to watch themselves back
* Create opportunities for children’s performances on a more regular basis.
* Think about listening – there where’s, why’s and how’s and build it into a future presentation
* Incorporate visual arts more alongside music making, especially mark-making to interpret sound. In effect this is creating graphic scores, which could be played by others.
* Think more about the preparatory elements of a project – to cover a variety of circumstances.
* Use YouTube

**Reflections from the providers**

Two important themes emerged from the providers’ feedback. One was their concern at pitching to adults activities normally carried out with children, with whom they felt more at ease – that the pace and facilitative skills and language to use have to adapt. These were evidently learned through the process of delivering. The second was in relation to ownership of material, and the sharing of resources, such as ideas, songs and repertoire. *‘All sorts of people get very possessive about songs and games which "are theirs." So it's worth asking whoever you got a song or game from if you can share it publicly before standing up and sharing. For every song that you give away, three will come back to you*’.

Another workshop leader pointed out the challenges of clarifying what was for ‘giving away and sharing’ in songs, that could be adapted and used by others, in contrast to those over which she was seeking advice, comment and ideas for delivery. These seem very important issues that, again, reveal the need for deeper understanding of the purpose of repertoire and its application, as well as the important aspect of copyright and ownership. If practitioners take and use each other’s material, *how* it is used can change its nature, its impact and its original intention. Again, this implies the need for thinking in depth about the purposes of activities and about acknowledging sources.

**Developing a reflective questioning approach**

With the overall aim of the series in mind, it was important to challenge the traditional thinking that Early Years music making is just about musical activities. We had learned from initial consultations in 2009 the need to shift that perception to include the impact of music on young children’s development within a wider context. To that end it was important to encourage a reflective approach. The reflective logs from three Moving On champions reveal their thoughts which also throw up further questions for future training.

Tara Murphy’s thoughts after the first seminar:

*‘I think children learn through having opportunities of different experiences e.g. copying, exploring, discovering, repeating.*

*I am comfortable that my role as teacher changes depending on the context e.g. as an observer, co-constructor, facilitator, leader.*

*I believe that when taught in an interesting and enjoyable way children can learn huge amounts about anything, this builds their self-confidence and esteem and their identities as learners. It is very important, possibly central, that children have fun and enjoy music. But I'm not convinced that this alone is a rationale for early years music. I don't believe that as a music leader I am an 'entertainer'.*

*My belief about who should teach music... someone who knows all about music? I would say not but again and again I become frightened by the fact that I am not a “musician”! So I must hold the belief that in order to teach music even to young children you should be knowledgeable about it. Interesting how some of these beliefs have been easy to vocalise and others are much deeper and quite complicated and others are not yet resolved. How important to have this opportunity to be challenged and to have to think deeply’!*

*I loved the workshops! Really amazing. Both sessions also were so playful! Not at all how I am used to music sessions being, an important point for me to remember and challenge. I am really interested in how both talked about improvisation and spontaneity when working with children. I do this when I teach other areas, but in music I feel unsure and intimidated so have unconsciously restricted myself – must move on!*

*I am really interested in how communication seems to be at the heart of all this. How music is really a language for people to make a connection and communicate - I have never thought about music like this before! Surely one of the most powerful things you can do with young children is to really listen and respond in a meaningful way to them... and music play is perfect for this.*

And at the end:

*‘About the cross-modal nature of children's understanding and play. This made a lot of sense and was very interesting. But this is really talking about very fundamental changes in the way I organise and think about children's learning.*

*It has definitely challenged me to consider this aspect of learning and see about how to experiment and play with these ideas when I teach’*

Bym Welthy made the choice to use a visually creative method for recording his thoughts, rather than using a traditional written log. He selected ‘Wordle’, a free online resource that generates “word clouds” from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text **[www.wordle.net]**. He described his learning journey as moving through various stages, with particular reference to the first seminar

*The wordles work best as a series to me: 150 of the most used words being trimmed down to the 5 most used words, stage by stage. This mirrors how the first seminar was for me; before arriving I had very little idea of what to expect, there was a world FULL of possibilities - all sorts of things that could be involved, a clutter.*

As the day progressed the clutter of words in his head grew more focused. He found: *my head got rapidly filled with new concepts and methods, but common themes were emerging… Children were, obviously, the focus of our work, it was a very ideas based introduction to the series, that was very contemporary and modern in its methodology and the ideas it delivered. There were certainly lots of them.*

But then by the end of the day: *my head was swimming with new notions, ideas and methods and my brain felt like the 150 Wordle again! All the participants were asked to give some feed back and be part of an online community. Once all the feedback was published I copied it bit by bit and pasted it into Wordle to make these images. The clarity of the 5-word Wordle is striking: ‘Ideas – Need – Music – Children - Activities.’*

The timing of the CPD seminar appeared to him to be of significance too:

***What do the individual words listed in the chosen wordle mean to you, and why were those words important to capture?***

*This was made shortly after the formation of the Coalition Government and the announcement of many cuts to come, the beginning of "these austere times." So, stripping things down to the essentials was in the air - as was uncertainty, fear and apprehension. This session gave me a whole new sense of purpose, direction (and confidence).*

**Evaluator’s comments:**

**How effective was the Moving On series in achieving:**

**1.**     **Building on existing knowledge**

The aim of this series was not to promote a framework to fit all CPD circumstances, but rather to recognise the many starting points of the participants and to offer a range of information, experiences and questions that would allow participants to consider their own practice in more depth. The participants emphasised how the seminars had helped them develop an essential toolkit of ways of thinking of their own provision. The series can be judged to have been successful in building on practitioner’s existing knowledge, particularly in:

* Helping them re-evaluate their aims;
* Going back to the theories underpinning music learning;
* Encouraging them to stop, listen and allow time for children’s creative play;
* Valuing the documentation of music learning to learn and feed back to children and families.

**2.**     **Understanding about young children’s musical development**

The wide range of knowledge in the participants made this outcome more difficult to assess. There were voices from both education and musician backgrounds. Overall, the impression from participants was that progression is important; that understanding about children’s musical development fundamentally challenges one’s own views and experiences of musical childhoods, and benefits from knowledge of a range of underpinning theories.

*‘there is much to learn, a whole expanse in fact. That there is also much to consider with a child, where they might be from, how much they want to play the music you are playing, how they may pick up the music you’ve come to teach’.*

**3.**     **Developing and sharing effective practice; singing, listening, performing, moving and narrating**

This outcome was achieved in part; the workshops brought together a wide range of leaders and facilitators with both national and local profiles. It emphasised that effective practice depends on how it is shared, interpreted and questioned. Some leaders were less successful at pitching their presentations at adult learners. According to the feedback from participants it was the most enjoyable aspect of the course and led to a raised level of personal confidence, and raised understanding of the importance of sharing quality live musical experiences and exploring digital resources with children. As a result of the series informal networks were formed who went on to work together and initiate new music making projects funded by Youth Music.

**4.**     **Developing a reflective questioning approach**

The reflective logs of the three ‘Moving On’ champions demonstrate how the series of seminars were instrumental in helping them to extend their thinking, their understanding, their knowledge and their skills. One took up the challenge of studying for the MA in Early Childhood Music accredited by Birmingham City University while the other two have been key figures in Open Programmes funded by Youth Music.

Tara’s log sums it up:

*‘’I am really interested in how communication seems to be at the heart of all this. How music is really a language for people to make a connection and communicate - I have never thought about music like this before! Surely one of the most powerful things you can do with young children is to really listen and respond in a meaningful way to them... and music play is perfect for this’’.*

**Conclusions**

Taking into account the feedback from participants in terms of their reflections on their personal learning and on what they were resolved to do as a result, it appears that the Moving On series has fulfilled its overall aim especially in supporting participants’ knowledge, understanding and reflective questioning. In some cases it has led them to enrol in further study. Two participants have enrolled on an MA in Early Years, whilst at least five participants have attended the Early Years Music Conference in January 2012, delivered in partnership with MusicLeader West Midlands and Birmingham City Council. What is difficult to quantify is the impact on early years practice with children as a direct result of this intervention. What we do know is that practitioners have given examples throughout the course, and shared in anecdotal evidence in workshop sessions. One of the main issues in demonstrating the direct result of the intervention, is that every music leader on the course would need to be observed delivering an intervention, at the start of the course, and then once again at the end to add some additional external reflection. What the course provided was evidence in the form of personal reflection. We recognised during the course that with such a large number of practitioners, many of whom only attended part of the course, we would be unable to demonstrate this across the board. However the spotlight champions completed reflective logs and video material. One additional resource produced as part of this was a training resource which demonstrates how a music leader may reflect on work, they have videoed. You can how Tara did this here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-JlGaa9ols>

For future reference if running this course again, funding allowing, there would be a sufficient time and resource allocated in order for follow up with individual leaders at a local level within settings. One of most beneficial outcomes from the programme is the informal partnerships and networks between music leaders and EY practitioners, formed as a result of this series. They have already moved towards new collaborative ventures and these could form the basis for further opportunities for mentoring and support should the series be repeated in other regions. Musicians’ learning journeys have been recorded on film to accompany the associated Resource Pack and the level of reflective thinking portrayed in this footage deserves noting for its depth and sensitivity.

The level of engagement throughout has been strong and the intensity of the discussions has shown that people felt comfortable in airing their views and in taking risks. Although it is often an over-loaded term, levels of confidence were often referred to in the regular feedback sessions. As the series progressed it became evident that a core of interested participants was eager to both contribute ideas and to help to facilitate and lead discussions.

The strategy of using local workshop leaders allowed for a range of skills to be shared. The feedback from the sessions suggested a varied response. This was not unpredictable; the way activities are promoted and introduced in workshops with adults when they have children in mind is a sophisticated concept and takes time and experience to develop. It points to the importance of planning, of having focused aims and to the need for integrated local knowledge on which such CPD opportunities can build, to make professional education opportunities as effective as possible.

**Recommendations**

* This series as a model for CPD could be repeated in other regions or sub-regionally, drawing on local knowledge and expertise of local music leaders who could identify a range of practitioners both from community music groups and Early Years settings, as participants.
* It appears important to maintain a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical approaches, but to bring the relevance of the two together, rather than see them at opposite ends of a spectrum.
* Given the wide range of the potential audience for this model of CPD, it seems important to ensure strong leadership in professional development, as well as academic and practical rigour to coordinate the range of disciplines involved and in order to bear in mind the range of EY contexts and pedagogic approaches.
* This series took a ‘broad brush’ approach. There is a need to support practitioners participating in this network, and there is a strong case for following up the series with more in-depth seminars as part of an ongoing network, specialising in theory in practice and practice in theory.
* Clear potential pathways towards further opportunities for accreditation of training and more in-depth study.

**Implications: What next?**

New regional partnerships were developed beyond the scope of the programme, including a separate Early Years event, for which MLWM were specifically commissioned to deliver for Worcestershire County Council Early Years Team and their workers in March 2011.

In addition, on a wider level, an outcome from the programme was that a group of presenters and participants from the series came together to develop initial ideas for an early years project to explore approaches to engage hard-to-reach parents in early years music-making. This project, called ‘Music Moves’ secured Open Programme funding in June 2011.

As a result of the series, one participant has successfully applied to the newly designed Music Education course accredited by Birmingham City University, in partnership with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC). Students are able to take a research pathway specialising in Early Years music or to include an early childhood music research module as part of a broader early childhood focused MA programme.

An annual Birmingham EY music conference has been held for the past 4 years. The REO brought together the organisers from Birmingham’s EY advisory team with MusicLeader West Midlands to agree to extend this event to delegates from the whole region for the summer 2010 event. The aim is to use the 2011 partnership event to disseminate the Resource Pack developed as part of the Moving On programme, and to encourage a wider group of stakeholders to engage with this Early Years network.

**Moving On with an outcome focused approach through Youth Music**

Early Years is a goal area for Youth Music, with the specific goal being to ‘advance the learning and development of all children in their early years (0-5s), by aiming to ensure universal access (in England) to high quality music-making activities across a range of settings’. Specific objectives include ‘embedding a culture of high quality music making in early years settings’ and to ‘develop and support a substantial programme of sharing and enabling effective practice in early years music making. MusicLeader West Midlands is funded by Youth Music and is delivered in partnership with mac Birmingham.

The ‘Moving On’ seminar series was selected as a Spotlight project by Youth Music, to encourage the sharing of best practice with early years music making.

The overall aim for MusicLeader West Midlands is to ‘raise the quality, value and impact of music leadership in the UK’ via a series of outcomes.

* To have raised the standard of music leadership
* To have provided access to high quality professional development opportunities based on well-researched needs
* To have raised awareness and understanding among the workforce and their employers of the value of developing and sharing skills and practice.
* To have enabled the workforce to evaluate and share the effective practice they have developed.
* To have increased the level of investment in professional development by employers, practitioners and funders.

In addition to these national outcomes, MLWM has a specified regional outcome to

* To increase further the collaboration between Youth Music in the region and other youth music funded projects, making best use of the Youth Music investment.

The ‘Moving On’ activity has enabled MLWM to address all of these outcomes, specifically relating to early years practice in the West Midlands region. However, CPD is a continuous process of questioning and evaluating and as local expertise grows, so should the demand for further knowledge and understanding.

Regular attendees at the seminars now form the core of an EY Network for the West Midlands, and plans are in place for a twice yearly meeting with a CPD focus, which will form a continuing community of practice, or network. This aims to enable practitioners to continue to share best practice and network, by providing an opportunity to reflect on how the seminars have informed the development and improvements made, as well as an opportunity to debate issues surrounding music in the EY sector.

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1. <http://www.musicleader.net/uploads/documents/doc_930.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-JlGaa9ols> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.musicleader.net/uploads/documents/doc_931.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Page 27 – 32 of the final MO resource pack. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqX2Q0hlzpU> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)