

***'Sounding Out'* – vocal and instrumental music-making with secondary hearing impaired students at Blanche Nevile & Oak Lodge schools**

PROJECT SUMMARY/OUTLINE (v4)

Creative Futures has primary funding from Youth Music, with additional funding from the Bernarr Rainbow Trust and Ernest Cook Trust, to deliver a three-year vocal and instrumental music programme for deaf and Hearing Impaired (HI) students from two specialist London secondary schools: Oak Lodge in Wandsworth and Blanche Nevile in Haringey. It builds on a programme at Laycock Primary School in Islington where early research findings suggest that specialist singing training improves pitch perception, production and speech perception for hearing impaired students thus improving their access to and enjoyment of music and their speech and communication skills.

OUTCOMES

- (1) Increase students' participation in vocal and instrumental music-making
- (2) Increase the musical skills and competencies of students
- (3) Enhance the speech, language and communication skills of participating students, and their self-confidence and aspiration
- (4) Strengthen music-leading skills in the HI sector: enhance the skills and confidence of music teachers and Creative Futures' practitioners; train new music leaders.
- (5) Through action research, augment understanding of how HI students engage in and enjoy music-making, and the positive impacts music has on them

Activities

- (1) Weekly vocal, instrumental and creative music-making workshops with students from Years 7-9 over three years in both schools exploring pitch, rhythm, notation and timbre through a range of musical activities.
- (2) Intensive and immersive music days at both schools at various points over the year.
- (3) Specialist consultancy and training from Music and the Deaf (MATD) for our music leaders and nominated staff at each school (4 combined sessions per year).

The project is being delivered by two or three music leaders (one of whom is a trainee) during an after-school club session at one school and during Curriculum Enrichment time at the other. We hope to gradually embed the programme more into curriculum time as it progresses.

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Collaboration, skills exchange, training and professional development

A key strand of this programme is the close collaboration between school music leaders and Creative Futures practitioners on the planning, delivery and continued evolution of the programme. We envisage working towards a two-way skills exchange through which all involved learn from each other and are open to developing individual practices and methods. Facilitated training by MATD up to four times each year will support and extend the professional development for all involved, and inject valuable music-specific expertise. A termly review and skills-sharing session for practitioners, teachers and researchers will enable all involved to reflect on and cement their experiences, and develop their professional practice.

In addition to CF practitioners learning from school music leaders, we will adopt at times a 'modelling, scaffolding and mentoring' approach whereby our workshop leaders build the musical skills and confidence of school teachers to develop and lead their own music work during and after the programme.

Trainee music practitioners will also be involved throughout the programme, providing opportunities for at least 6 trainees over three years to develop workshop leading skills in the context of deaf and HI young people, and to work alongside highly experienced practitioners. Our lead practitioners will mentor the trainees, who will also be supported by Creative Futures' Operations Manager in other aspects of their professional development.

Research

The research team (from the UCL Ear Institute and UCL Institute of Education led by Dr Deborah Vickers and Professor Graham Welch respectively is evaluating the impact of the programme on students':

- hearing and pitch perception;
- musical progression and appreciation;
- non-musical progression (eg wider learning);
- and possibly, executive function skills

The first year of the project is being treated mostly as a pilot phase during which we are trialling a number of methods of gathering data. This is in parallel with the music delivery itself which is also piloting different approaches in preparation for a more structured approach in Year 2. There has also been some inconsistency of pupils taking part from one term to the next, which has hampered any rigorous research testing – we expect to overcome this in future. From September 2016 we will gather pre-intervention baseline data from all participants, which will be analysed against mid-year and end-of-year data

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sets. This will give us a detailed picture of students' auditory, musical, and communicative development.

The research assessments by The Ear Institute team will look at perception and working memory abilities using validated and age-appropriate measures of (i) Speech in noise perception (ii) Phoneme perception (iii) Complex pitch perception (iv) Working memory assessments. Voice quality assessments may also be conducted using laryngograph analysis in which objective measurements of larynx control will be assessed. These tests will be carried out when a student starts the project, and then at the end of each year. Some mid-year testing may also be added if further evidence of progression is needed.

The UCL-IOE researchers will research musical and other-than-musical progression including: i) individual singing assessments; ii) measures of musical progression (employing the Sounds of Intent framework or an established measure of musical behaviours as appropriate to the context); iii) pupil questionnaires covering aspects including musical identity, learner identity, social inclusion and self-efficacy and (iv) observations of learner and teacher interactions.

In addition, we will conduct observational analyses of practitioner-teacher interaction across the project; practitioner's professional development; the apprentice musicians' professional development; and the comparative impact and value of the weekly vocal workshops and vacation instrumental sessions.

As part of the evaluation and learning from the project, Vanessa is keeping a detailed log of activities which the musicians are employing in the sessions, and through her own detailed observations is compiling the beginning of a toolkit or resource pack which will inform the future shaping and development of the project, as well as future versions of the programme in other schools.

Future extension plans

With our research partners we have ambitious plans to scale up this programme in the following areas:

A long-term (3-5 year) research study into the impacts on pitch perception, speech perception and communication skills of HI children from either a vocal only project, or a vocal and instrumental project, working with pre-school, primary and secondary age-groups. (est. cost £400k)

A national programme (in partnership with a national charity ideally) to support parents and teachers of HI children, from birth onwards, through simple structured singing and rhythm activities known to enhance early communication development (est cost £200k)

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