

**MUSICAL LEARNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELL-BEING,
WELL-BEING APPROACHES TO DEEPEN LEARNING: AN ACTION
RESEARCH PROJECT INTEGRATING COACHING, POSITIVE
PSYCHOLOGY, MINDFULNESS, AND MUSIC-MAKING**

Tracy Dempsey

Master's Thesis

Music, Mind and Technology

Department of Music

30 December 2020

University of Jyväskylä

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanities	Laitos – Department Music Department
Tekijä – Author Tracy Dempsey	
Työn nimi – Title Musical learning for the development of well-being, well-being approaches to deepen learning: an action research project integrating coaching, positive psychology, mindfulness, and music-making	
Oppiaine – Subject Music, Mind & Technology	Työn laji – Level Master’s Thesis
Aika – Month and year December 2020	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 95
<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Music-making can be a powerful source of well-being but does not occur in a vacuum. Participation in, and benefits derived from, music-making opportunities is affected by participants' confidence levels, beliefs about their abilities, previous experience and more. In Western culture, beliefs about music-making often include the notion that only certain people have musical ability; a misguided belief that prevents many from seeking out or engaging with music-making opportunities which could benefit their well-being. Other limiting beliefs affect well-being; coaching aims to help coachees identify and refine or replace such beliefs, encouraging transfer of skills from one area of competence to in the pursuit of specific goals. Positive psychology offers strategies for increasing well-being, including gratitude practice. Finally, evidence is mounting about the positive effects of mindfulness practice on well-being, with proponents reporting reduced anxiety and self-judgement. This action research project combined coaching, positive psychology, and mindfulness techniques in a music education project to explore their interconnected impacts on participant well-being and learning. An international group of 10 adults with little or no prior musical training or a strong desire to return to musical practice took part in an 8-week programme of 2-hour group sessions centred around <i>kantele</i> tuition, alongside individual coaching sessions exploring skill transference to and from other life areas. Qualitative analysis was used to explore the interconnected effects of elements of the study on participant well-being, with reference to Seligman's PERMA model. Participants (age range=24-51, musical training in years=0 (4), 0.5 (1), 2 (3), 6-9 (1)) reported increased well-being across multiple aspects of the PERMA model during semi-structured interviews, with thematic analysis identifying additional well-being outcomes. Due to participant workload and feedback, no behavioural tracking or reporting tasks were added to the weekly sessions. This led to high reported pleasure, but perhaps at the expense of more marked results via stronger habit formation, which might have increased well-being further due to competency gains in musical and mindfulness skills. Future iterations of the action research cycle could explore these issues.</p>	

Asiasanat – Keywords	
music psychology, music-making, coaching, positive psychology, mindfulness, action research, lifelong learning, community music	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Acknowledgements

I have benefited from many wonderful arts programmes since childhood, and been inspired by many teachers who encouraged my love of learning - the first being my parents, who especially encouraged, and funded, my musical education. (Not to mention chasing down the bus to Saturday morning orchestra.) I am grateful to all the passionate facilitators, educators, and artists who have inspired me and enriched my life through their work. Sincere thanks to: Marc Thompson, whose modesty is surpassed only by his kindness and patience. He gave so much invaluable advice as well as entertaining lectures, and I am immensely grateful for all he has done these last few weeks, along with Henna-Riika Peltola and the JYU staff and administration. The spirit of Christmas is strongest in Finland. My co-adventurer Conor, all our classmates and our many other lovely *kaverit Suomessa* for all the *craic agus ceol agus korvapuustit* in Finland and beyond. *Kippis!* The faculty and staff at the Musica Department and other departments for all the stimulating lectures, Jukka Louhivuori for showing me how to play kantele, suggesting songs for the project, and letting my participants use the university kanteles. Olga Kolari, a talented and lovely musician who generously loaned me multiple kanteles, including a very fine (and valuable) Koistinen, and wee Kristiina for giving away her (invaluable) piccolo kantele for 7 weeks. It brought as much joy to its temporary custodian as it did to its small owner upon its return. Kari Dahlblom of the Pelimannitalo kantele museum, who gave Conor and I a wonderful impromptu performance in that esteemed venue, and kindly loaned me kanteles for the project. I was so very sorry to hear of his passing; I know it was a great loss to the musical community. The beautiful humans at the Gloria Multicultural Centre who provided a warm welcome, a lovely room for us to enjoy mindfully making music in (sometimes with bonus food), and the opportunity for my stellar performers to showcase their hard work to an appreciative audience. A beautiful organisation dedicated to mutual cultural respect, in whose lobby an amused observer once remarked: “This is the definition of multiculturalism: an Irish woman teaching a Colombian woman Finnish kantele...” And finally, my wonderful participants, whose openness, curiosity, trust, and humour made the project such a beautiful experience. *Kiitos*, thank-you, *xièxie*, *Dankeschön*, *cnacúóo*, *ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ*, *gracias*, *감사합니다*, *go raibh maith agaibh!*

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Overview	7
1.2	Professional context.....	8
1.2.1	Coaching	9
1.2.2	Mindfulness.....	10
1.2.3	Positive psychology	11
1.2.4	Music-making	11
1.3	Purposes.....	12
1.4	Importance of the study	14
1.5	Limitations of the study.....	15
1.5.1	Language and cultural issues.....	15
1.5.2	Timing.....	15
1.5.3	Technical issues	16
1.5.4	Data collection limitations	16
1.5.5	Project write-up.....	18
2	Literature review	19
2.1	Music and positive emotion.....	20
2.2	Music and engagement	22
2.3	Music and positive relationships	24
2.4	Music and meaning.....	26
2.5	Music and accomplishment	28
2.6	Conclusion.....	29
3	Methodology	31
3.1	Primary decisions and limitations.....	31
3.2	Data collection.....	32
3.3	Ethics and confidentiality	32
3.4	Participants	34
3.5	Pre- and post-project questionnaires.....	36
3.6	Musical instrument(s).....	37
3.7	Group learning sessions.....	38
3.7.1	Environment.....	38
3.7.2	Group coaching	41
3.7.3	Introduction to the kantele.....	42
3.7.4	Set pieces.....	43
3.7.5	Learning by ear	44
3.7.6	Musical theory.....	44
3.7.7	Musical perception	46
3.7.8	Musical improvisation.....	46
3.7.9	Music listening	47
3.7.10	At-home practice.....	47
3.7.11	Public performance	48
3.7.12	Positive psychology intervention	48
3.8	Mindfulness practice.....	49
3.9	One-to-one coaching sessions.....	49
3.10	Post-project interviews	51
3.11	Validation	53
4	Findings.....	55
4.1	Thematic analysis	55
4.1.1	How can musical learning boost well-being?.....	56
4.1.2	How can mindfulness boost well-being?.....	70
4.1.3	How can the practice of gratitude boost well-being?	74
4.1.4	How can coaching boost well-being?.....	77
4.1.5	How can mindfulness practice deepen the impact of learning experiences?.....	81

4.1.6	How can the practice of gratitude deepen the impact of learning experiences?	81
4.1.7	How can coaching deepen the impact of learning experiences?	81
4.1.8	How useful is the PERMA model of well-being when applied to learning interventions, particularly musical learning?	81
4.1.9	How can I become more effective in my work in the above areas, whilst honouring my values? ..	82
4.1.10	Can my proposed programme meaningfully affect well-being and musical engagement?.....	82
5	Discussion	84
6	CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH	86
	References	87
	APPENDICES.....	92
	APPENDIX 1	92
	APPENDIX 2	93

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Musical engagement can afford great benefits to those who take part, but many are prevented from doing so by psycho-social issues around anxiety, confidence, and fear of failure; practical issues around cost and access to tuition; and cultural attitudes about the nature of human musical ability. Arts education and programmes are under severe financial pressure in many places, with arts subjects losing out to STEM subjects in mainstream education and community artists and arts programmes experiencing cuts to funding, cutting off important and powerful sources of personal and community well-being and socio-cultural enrichment. The present study explores how well-being approaches can be used to remove barriers to musical learning, and how musical learning can enhance well-being. It also investigates how learning can be deepened by the application of new skills to different areas of life.

Being an action research project, this text is also a transparent account of my learning processes, presented in parallel to the account of participants' learning and the unfolding of the project. In order to validate of my approach, I have endeavoured to adhere to the five principles of validation put forward by Heikkinen, Huttunen, and Syrjälä (2007) in their discussion on ways to improve quality of action research. The first is the principle of historical continuity, which requires an examination of how the action evolved historically, and includes *emplotment*, that is, the development of the narrative in a logical and coherent way. The second is the principle of reflexivity, an examination of subjective adequacy (the nature of researchers' relationships with their objects of research) and their ontological and epistemological presumptions. In this introduction, I consider those presumptions, my relationship with the research areas of music and well-being, and the evolution of action in the context of my own professional practice. The following section's review of literature on musical engagement and well-being places the current project in the historical context of that research.

The third principle, transparency, deals with how researchers describe their material and methods. I have aimed to be transparent about both in the methodology section of this text, with supplemental information provided in footnotes and the appendices, and with the exception of

raw participant data which I excluded from the start to protect confidentiality, given the small, local, and relatively visible nature of the project. I considered that the right ethical balance between the needs of this write-up and participants' need for privacy.

The principle of dialectics is the fourth posited by Heikkinen et al., encompassing dialogue, polyphony, and authenticity. To uphold this principle, I discuss how my insight has developed through dialogue with participants throughout the text, particularly in terms of differing interpretation, and how that shaped methodological adaptations during and after the project. I have shared the authentic voices of my participants through careful thematic analysis and in their own words.

The principle of workability refers to pragmatic quality (how well the research succeeds in creating workable practices), criticality (what kind of discussion the research provokes), ethics (how well ethical issues were addressed), and empowerment (whether research makes people believe in their own capabilities and action possibilities, thereby encouraging new practices and actions). These issues are addressed throughout and particularly highlighted in the results and discussion sections. Finally, I have endeavoured to adhere to the principle of evocativeness in this narrative, by attempting to evoke mental imagery, memory and emotion related to the themes of this research in my descriptions of the work I and my participants did together and our responses to it.

1.2 Professional context

As a practicing coach and trainer incorporating mindfulness in my work, I wanted to validate my approach and methods, and test my assumptions within a framework of scientific enquiry, to improve the quality of my own praxis. As a musician who has benefited from formal musical education up until adulthood and participation in community arts as an adult, I was keen to create a pilot music and well-being project encouraging adults to engage with music-making and to learn techniques to improve well-being, exploring interconnected effects of both. In early discussion with my supervisor, action research methodology was identified as the most appropriate approach, allowing me to take purposeful action in alignment with my values, with the intent to create new knowledge and test the validity of my claims to knowledge in the areas

being explored, as part of an adaptive, negotiated, and iterative spiral of observation, action, and feedback. (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

1.2.1 Coaching

For Grant (as cited in Passmore, 2015) defines coaching as “a collaborative, solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the individuals and organisations” (p. 94). The coaching industry is growing more quickly than ever, but there is a paucity of quality studies measuring effectiveness of coaching interventions. A 2017 meta-analysis (Burt & Talati) investigating outcomes of coaching including well-being, performance, coping, and goal-directed self-regulation, found a moderate significant positive effect on coachees, $\hat{p} = 0.42$, indicating effectiveness of coaching for individuals. I wanted to explore how my coaching, specifically, could boost learning in a group setting, and help participants transfer skills from between the project and other areas of their life through one-to-one coaching.

More broadly, I wanted to develop scientific and methodological skills in order to better hold myself accountable and honour and openly communicate my values to clients. I had discovered many claims to knowledge in coaching and other self-help materials that exaggerated or misrepresented the academic studies upon which they were based, and wanted to become more skilled in judging such claims, to avoid making the same errors myself.

There is a tension between positivism and constructivism in my work, in that I believe much of our reality is constructed but that there are certain limitations on experience imposed by our embodied selves. Whereas some coaches operate on the non-directive end of a spectrum, my coaching is somewhat directive, since I share information, resources, and ideas I believe might be useful to clients, always reminding them these are suggestions to be accepted or rejected as the client sees fit. I position myself as having a level of expertise (which I review and update in response to new knowledge) to offer in certain areas of interest to the client, whilst recognising the client as the expert in their own life, if temporarily inhibited from perceiving themselves as such. I frame decision-making as a value-driven process we carry out in the absence of perfect knowledge and, often, the presence of competing values. In short, my goal is to support or increase their agency, their ability to bring about change in their personal relationships, their

careers, and their communities. Welzel and Inglehart (2010) advanced a human development model that described the following sequence: widening life opportunities lead to a stronger emphasis on emancipative values, which leads to increased importance of feelings of agency in gauging life satisfaction, which leads to an increase in life satisfaction. With this study, I wanted to examine the impact of coaching-supported agency in a learning opportunity on participant well-being.

Through this study I have begun to develop the language to explore this position further, but I have also been reminded that the only outcome of learning is more learning (Dewey, 1963).

1.2.2 Mindfulness

At its core, mindfulness is the simple practice of paying attention to the present moment, with something – an object, task, or environment – as the focus of attention. Much research into the effects of mindfulness has been focused on Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programme and on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), developed by John D. Teasdale, J. Mark G. Williams, and Zindel Segal. A 2015 overview of systematic reviews and meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) based on these two standardised programmes (Gotink et al., 2015) found significant improvement on depressive symptoms, anxiety, stress, quality of life, and physical functioning. I have been incorporating simple mindfulness exercises and theory into my coaching and training for the last eight years, having found mindfulness practice to be an effective remedy for a common feature hindering participants' progress towards goal achievement: a self-critical attitude, engendering anxiety about their ability to succeed. This is often accompanied by overwhelm, increasingly so as social media and other always-on communication methods have become more widespread. I was keen to begin exploring how simple mindfulness interventions might overcome these issues in the context of musical learning, and to consider how I might validate use of such practices in my small-group and individual settings.

1.2.3 Positive psychology

I wanted to explore the effect of positive psychology interventions in application to a musical learning project. Whilst the intercultural dimension was not the focus of the study, I was interested to discover responses to the Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) popular “Three Good Things” daily gratitude intervention in an international group, having experienced mixed results with the practice myself and with clients. As it transpired over the course of the project, many participants did not practice gratitude daily, but were practicing it weekly at our sessions (absence notwithstanding). An initial plan to investigate the Values in Action Strengths Inventory as a framework for classifying strengths was abandoned due to time constraints and participant workload. However, strengths identification and employment in service of goals was a general topic in coaching sessions.

1.2.4 Music-making

Throughout primary and secondary school, I was a member of multiple orchestras and choirs, and took part in many music residencies, local performances and even a small tour of France and Switzerland in a regional orchestra. These were wonderful opportunities for artistic enjoyment, social enrichment and travel and I developed the youthful impression that “musicians” were somewhat of a minority group, based on my observations of how few of the pupils in my school had regular music lessons in school, or travelled on Saturdays to the various regional bands and orchestra. This was partly due to the lack of a live music scene in the town, and later countryside, where I grew up. Contemporary live music was not something I experienced until university, when I was no longer interested in playing classical music.

Years later, I wanted to return to music-making, as a singer and guitarist with basic, self-taught skills, and began taking part in short courses and community arts programmes, which were often funded with cross-community or anti-racism goals in mind. I have particularly benefited from playing in a samba band, which gave me experience of learning music without the benefit of a shared spoken language, when *maestres* from Recife in Brazil came to Belfast to give us drumming masterclasses, and neither they nor most of us spoke the other's language. This showed me that music learning can happen without mutually intelligible verbal communication, which meant that I was comfortable having a participant with whom I shared no language (discussed at various points below).

In 2010, I developed an informal cabaret series called the Sofa Sessions, meant to place artists on the same level as the audience in a non-hierarchical, in-the-round format, encouraging audience members to participate in some way over the course of the evening. I wanted to remove the distance between performer and listener-observer created by a stage, to inspire audience members to access and share their own creativity in response to the art around them. This project was a natural extension of that goal.

1.3 Purposes

I designed this project with a number of key purposes in mind:

- to foster in participants and observers a recognition of innate human musicality, as opposed to musicality being a rare “gift” in certain individuals,
- to foster in participants and observers a recognition of their continued ability to learn and be creative as adults (countering notion of being “too old” to learn new skills),
- to demonstrate to participants and observers how particular strategies and engagement in learning projects can support learning and build confidence and self-esteem,
- to inspire participants and observers to consider other goals previously thought to be out of reach, with an increased sense of learning ability and confidence,
- to provide participants with an opportunity to create and achieve musical goals in a supportive environment, with a team comprising a coach/tutor and peers, experimenting with multiple techniques to boost performance and well-being,
- to add to existing research on music and well-being, and
- to further promote music-making as a powerful source of well-being in individuals, groups, and societies, thus bolstering support for community arts, music education and music therapy.

These purposes express claims to knowledge, which will be tested in the section on findings.

Professional goals were:

- to validate my professional practice and develop important research skills necessary for ethical integrity, and
- to validate this music and well-being programme for future roll-out.

Additional goals in a social or community context were:

- to promote the University of Jyväskylä (JYU) music psychology programme, music department, facilities, and research,
- to better integrate myself into the Jyväskylä community, and
- to pay respect to the people and culture of Finland, in gratitude for the academic opportunity they provided me.

An earlier planned purpose was to explore ways of accelerating musical learning. However, early participant feedback around their goals for the project (particularly enjoyment and relaxation) led me to decide not to risk adding negative stress by using rigorous practice techniques and schedules. This decision is further addressed in the methodology section.

From the above purposes, the following research questions were derived in order to test the claims to knowledge embedded in the purposes:

- How can musical learning boost well-being?
- How can mindfulness exercises boost well-being?
- How can the practice of gratitude boost well-being?

- How can coaching boost well-being?
- How can mindfulness exercises deepen the impact of learning experiences?
- How can the practice of gratitude deepen the impact of learning experiences?
- How can coaching deepen the impact of learning experiences?
- How useful is the PERMA model of well-being when applied to learning interventions, particularly musical learning?

Reflexive questions were:

- How can I become more effective in my work in the above areas, whilst honouring my values?
- Can my proposed programme meaningfully affect well-being and musical engagement?

As the action research project progressed, the daily gratitude question was amended by removal of the word 'daily', given that many participants did not carry out the exercise daily. We did the practice weekly in our group sessions, but as only one participant attended all sessions (six missed one, one missed two, and one missed three), the research question could only be answered by removal of frequency altogether. Thus, it became:

- How can the practice of gratitude affect well-being?

1.4 Importance of the study

The study is of personal value to me in my own professional development and thus to my clients, in terms of increased effectiveness. Importantly, it is a useful pilot study for developing music and well-being workshops and programmes. I hope it will be of value to musical educators and community arts practitioners, through the ideas and tools examined herein and the discussion of pitfalls and challenges in delivering this kind of programme. Above all, I hope

it encourages people who see themselves as non-musical to reconsider that assumption and be inspired to follow in the path of the participants in engaging or re-engaging with artistic practice, enjoying the well-being benefits that can bring. Additionally, it may add to a growing body of action research and to important discussion about how practitioner researchers can strive to improve the validation of their work.

1.5 Limitations of the study

1.5.1 Language and cultural issues

The study was conducted almost entirely in English, my native language, with one participant providing live translation for her. This immediately created an imbalance of power between myself and others with native languages other than English. Nuance in participant responses was inevitably lost, but more importantly, there could have been well-being impacts for those participants operating in a second language, due to frustration at not being free to express themselves in their native or preferred language. Of course, such challenges can also provide well-being opportunities in terms of a sense of achievement in overcoming adversity, confidence, self-efficacy, or novelty. Either way, there is an additional cognitive load involved in operating in a second language.

Additionally, cultural biases must be acknowledged in an international group setting. Whilst I have coached an international client base and have done some short-duration group coaching work for organisations in Northern Ireland supporting immigrants, this was the first project of this length I delivered to an international group.

1.5.2 Timing

There was a negative impact of timing and travel commitments on attendance among our mostly international group, which included five university students. A late October start date due to my own work commitments in Ireland (which were funding my studies) meant the project ended ten days before Christmas, with four participants leaving Jyväskylä before the final session, including the public performance. At-home practice was affected by practical issues like packing for house moves, assignments and exams, end of year university or work events and so

on. Some sessions were missed due to winter illness, travel, and, sadly, family bereavement, such that only one participant was able to attend all eight sessions. Six participants missed one session, one missed two, and one missed three. To address this, I offered individual catch-up sessions, although most participants preferred to catch up in class.

The proximity to the Christmas holidays also meant that many of the post-test interviews were held in January, over Skype. There was, therefore, not a consistent time lag across the group between the end of the project and the final interview, which may have coloured feedback, increasing the risk of issues of selective memory, telescoping or exaggeration, on my part or the participants', as time went on.

1.5.3 Technical issues

Lag and other quality issues with the audio or video calls used for the final interviews, coupled with language or accent issues, made some of the communication hard to make out. Lags also meant more frequent overlaps of speech, which at times interrupted the flow. (Listening to recorded interviews also highlighted for me my own tendency to overlap participant speech in my enthusiasm for things they have said, which was useful if regrettable information for reflexive practice.)

1.5.4 Data collection limitations

The usefulness of the quantitative data gathered through the pre-test and post-test scoring was limited by the small group size. It was further limited by the non-completion of a pre-test questionnaire by one participant, and language issues encountered by some participants, however, since the data was being used as a basis for discussion in coaching sessions and the post-test interviews, the impact of that omission was minimal. With clarification on those occasions, they were useful as a limited methodological triangulation of results.

Whilst the group was small from a quantitative data collection viewpoint, it was quite large for a case study approach, particularly once one-to-one, weekly coaching sessions were added. This greatly increased my workload, which I did not see as a limitation at the time, due to the rich data-gathering opportunity it afforded, and the meaningful and rewarding nature of the work, but it did impact the amount of one-on-one attention I could give to participants in the music-

making segments of the group classes. Participants thus might have made somewhat less progress from a musical learning standpoint than if the group had been smaller. It also gave them slightly less opportunity for social bonding.

Due to such complexity and scale, I deemed it impracticable to split the group into an experimental group and a control group. As such, comparisons between effects of various elements of the project can only be made through self-report by participants and perhaps observations of my own, which sometimes differed from participant perceptions (and which were then explored during coaching sessions or post-test interviews).

The majority of the respondents (nine out of ten) were female, which lessened the diversity of the group. There was not time to take additional steps to try and recruit males for more balance.

There was an inevitable possibility of bias in the post-project interviews, given the positive regard which had developed between myself and participants; it was possible that some might have skewed their responses to the positive so as not to offend me, or have perceived my abilities as greater than they are due to the “halo effect”. Furthermore, taking, in large part, a deductive analysis approach, that is to say, asking questions about pre-existing hypotheses, meant that if a participant reported a positive result that I was expecting (with attendant risk of confirmation bias on my part), I was explicitly asking if they thought the result might be linked to an aspect of the study or not. These questions may have influenced response. To try and counteract this, I stressed at post-project interview (and indeed during coaching sessions) that the project was a pilot one and that I would benefit from all constructive feedback to help me design future versions of the project. Participants did share ideas for how to improve it.

The inclusion of ongoing coaching in relation to any area of the participants' lives outside of the immediate project (to explore transferral of skills and impacts of attitudinal and behavioural shifts) entailed a higher level of confidentiality than might otherwise have been necessary. This eliminated some methods of evaluating validity, such as using an additional coder or coders and calculating inter-coder reliability. However, such methods assume a positivist view that there is a reality to be discovered through a particular, carefully-applied technique, whereas coaching is a phenomenological, more constructivist way of understanding, and indeed challenging, clients to reconsider notions of the “reality” of their experiences, in order to

generate new possibilities of response to those experiences. Whether the lack of coding reliability approaches is considered a limitation or not depends, therefore, on the epistemological perspective of the reader.

1.5.5 Project write-up

Since completing the project, I moved countries twice and moved to a different town five times, and additionally developed a health condition for which I required emergency admission to hospital twice, with a recovery period in my home country on one of these occasions. I had planned to develop a new iteration of the project, using ukuleles instead of *kanteles* with a group of immigrants in Spain, and to include that in this study; those plans had to be put on hold. There has therefore been a long lag between the project outlined in this text and the writing up of the project. This did allow me to include in my results five-year updates from four participants on whether they had continued to play the kantele or other musical instrument, or if they were still practicing mindfulness or gratitude exercises.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to literatures referenced elsewhere in this text which informed my conceptual frameworks, I conducted a review of the literature on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being and literature on music-related wellbeing, to explore how they might intertwine.

In 1998, Martin E. P. Seligman was elected President of the American Psychological Association, and officially launched the field of positive psychology, aiming to “begin to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). By 2011, Seligman had developed his earlier work on learned helplessness, learned optimism and happiness theory into a new theory of well-being, outlined in his 2011 book “Flourish: A new understanding of happiness and well-being – and how to achieve them”. This well-being theory comprises five independent, measurable elements required for a flourishing life, namely: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, collectively referred to by the mnemonic PERMA (p 16).

Seligman, in conjunction with Peterson and Park (2005/2009), also developed a “Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS)”; a self-report questionnaire that measures 24 character strengths, categorised under six core virtues as follows:

1. Wisdom: creativity, curiosity, judgement, love of learning, perspective
2. Courage: bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest
3. Humanity: love, kindness, social intelligence
4. Justice: teamwork, fairness, leadership
5. Temperance: forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation
6. Transcendence: appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality

Identification and active development of one's signature strengths is a core exercise in positive psychology interventions, found to decrease depression and increase happiness three and six months after the exercise's completion (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

Whilst much research has been conducted on the benefits of music for increasing health and well-being, this work has just begun to be examined through the lens of the PERMA model. This review will explore music psychology research in order to build a case for musical engagement as a powerful source for developing positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment, and as an opportunity for expressing individual strengths as listed in the VIA-IS. Research pertaining to music listening is included herein, since music listening is, as Elliot (1995) puts it, “an essential thread that binds musicians, musicing, and musical products together” (p. 41).

2.1 Music and positive emotion

Extensive literature exists on the topic of music and its effects on emotion, exploring how, why and to what extent music conveys emotions to or elicits emotions in listeners. Researchers are disunited on definitions and frameworks of emotions for their explorations, aside from a broad consensus that emotions are relatively short-term reactions to a stimulus. According to Scherer (2005), emotions involve several sub-components, namely the: “cognitive component (appraisal); neurophysiological component (bodily symptoms); motivational component (action tendencies); motor expression component (facial and vocal expression): subjective feeling component (emotional experience)”. In consideration of positive emotions, specifically, Fredrickson (1998) developed a theoretical model which she called the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. This theory attests that:

certain discrete positive emotions - including joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love - although phenomenologically distinct, all share the ability to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources. (p. 219)

Music psychology research has revealed many interesting insights into the functions of music for emotional regulation, for example: Of the 37-41% of waking time humans spend listening

to music (Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008; Sloboda et al., 2001), music evokes emotion in the listener 55-64% (Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Juslin et al., 2008). A study by Blood and Zatorre (2001) using positron emission topography to examine changes in cerebral blood flow accompanying listeners' subjective reports of “chills” observes that “as intensity of these chills increased, blood flow increases and decreases were observed in brain regions thought to be involved in reward/motivation, emotion, and arousal” (p. 11818). The same brain regions have been found to respond similarly to other euphoria-inducing stimuli, such as drugs, sex, and food. Music, therefore, can provide “natural highs” without many of the side effects associated with other stimulants; although music listening can also be maladaptive, such as in cases where listeners repeatedly select negative-emotion-inducing music in a similar habit to cognitive rumination (Garrido & Schubert, 2011; Carlson, 2012).

On the question of how music can evoke emotions, Juslin, Liljeström, Västfjäll, & Lundqvist (2010) developed the BRECVEM model outlining seven mechanisms, which are: brain stem reflex; rhythmic entrainment; evaluative conditioning; emotional contagion; visual imagery; episodic memory and musical expectancy. Lamont (2011) conducted a study of students' strong emotional responses to music, interpreting the results according to a model she developed by integrating Seligman's earlier happiness (eudaimonic well-being) model with Juslin and Västfjäll's model just described. In this model, Juslin and Västfjäll's seven mechanisms are mapped to three of Seligman's elements of happiness theory, namely positive emotion, engagement and meaning. Now that Seligman has expanded that happiness theory into the PERMA model of well-being and Juslin (2013) has expanded his framework as BRECVEMA, including aesthetic judgement as an eighth mechanism, further research into the mapping of musical engagement research and the PERMA framework would be useful.

Valentine & Evans (2001) showed that singing in a choir “reduced tense arousal and increased energetic arousal, positive hedonic tone and heart rate”. A study by Kreutz et al (2004) found that singing in a choir lead to an increase in positive affect and decrease in negative affect, accompanied by an increase in secretory immunoglobulin A, whereas listening to choral music led to increased negative affect and decreased levels of cortisol, suggesting “that choir singing positively influences both emotional affect and immune competence”. Lamont's 2011 study referenced above included performer and non-performer narratives, showing that music performance experiences involve mixed emotions of anxiety and pleasure. Approximately one

quarter of professional performers experience performance anxiety to a significant degree (Steptoe, 2001). Lamont recognised that negative emotions experienced through music performance could get in the way of or prevent a performer from experiencing engagement or meaning. It could also be argued that negative emotions could impact negatively on the other two elements of the PERMA model, i.e., positive relationships (with, for example, band members or other co-performers) and accomplishment (if, for example, a performer avoided performance opportunities due to a desire to avoid experiencing performance anxiety). Various positive psychology approaches may, however, help reduce performance anxiety or its effects, for example focusing on signature strengths (Seligman & Peterson, 2004) such as bravery, perseverance, love of learning, self-regulation, and humour.

An important aspect to consider in the current study was the question of emotional meaning in different languages and culture. A 2019 study used *colexification*, a phenomenon in which languages use the same word for semantically related concepts, to estimate emotion semantics across a sample of 2474 spoken languages. Analyses by the authors (Jackson et al.) found significant variation in networks of emotion concept colexification, as well as evidence of universal structure in emotion colexification networks. Differentiation of emotions within all families was primarily based on hedonic valence and physiological activation.

2.2 Music and engagement

Engagement in Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being refers to a state of flow: “being one with the music, time stopping, and the loss of self-consciousness during an absorbing activity” (p. 11). Whilst positive emotion is a hedonic state subjectively experienced in the present, engagement is a eudaimonic state subjectively experienced in the past, since it is typified by a loss of self-awareness and absence of thought and feeling. Csikszentmihaly (1992/2002) describes flow thus:

The optimal state of inner experience is one in which there is order in consciousness. This happens when psychic energy – or attention – is invested in realistic goals, and when skills match the opportunities for action. The pursuit of a goal brings order in awareness because a person must concentrate attention on the task at hand and momentarily forget everything else (p. 6).

Writing about flow and music specifically, Csikszentmihaly notes Plato's belief that children should be educated in music first and foremost, as a consciousness-ordering endeavour, whilst

bemoaning a decline in focus on musical education and, where music education is provided, a common problem whereby “too much emphasis is placed on how [learners] perform, and too little on what they experience” (pp. 111-112). In a research report into the benefits of arts education for young students, Friske (2004) claimed that “when well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies”, and that “the learning experiences are real and meaningful for them”. Further, in contrast to other forms of learning, Fiske points out that “the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities”, claiming that “engagement in the arts – whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines – nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.” Indeed, it has been observed that even infants and young children can experience a flow-like state through musical performance (Custodero, 2005). As to adults, Gabriellson and Lindström Wik, in a 2003 study of individuals' strong experiences related to music, encountered descriptions by performers of losing self-awareness during playing, typical of a flow state.

What is more, the flow state, being an enjoyable one, encourages individuals to seek out ever-increasing challenges in order to re-experience it. Unlike positive emotion, flow – i.e. engagement - requires continuously-increasing effort. As Csikszentmihaly puts it, “The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.” Perseverance, love of learning, curiosity and appreciation of beauty and excellence are obvious signature strengths that can be utilised in flow-inducing effort.

Whilst the potential of musical practice and skills development is thus an obvious source of flow experience, music listening also provides opportunities for increased engagement. Csikszentmihaly claims that “listening to music wards off boredom and anxiety, and when seriously attended to, it can induce flow experiences”. He outlines increasing levels of music listening engagement, and thus enjoyment, in terms of sensory listening, i.e., physiological reactions to certain musical structures or features; analogic listening, i.e. the application of skill in evoking imagery and feelings from those musical structures or features; and analytic listening, i.e. an evaluative approach to the structure, performance and acoustics of a piece (pp. 108-111). Packer & Ballantyne (2010) add contextual and social elements: in a study investigating the effects of musical festival attendance on participants' well-being, the authors

reported a common response that “being with likeminded people was an important aspect of the music festival experience” (p. 7).

Music listening is also beneficial for increasing engagement in other, primary tasks. The effect of music listening on cognitive performance has long been a topic of interest and debate, particularly since the publication of Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky's “Mozart Effect” article in *Nature* magazine in 1993. Schellenberg (2012), whilst refuting direct benefits of music listening on cognition, added that “it is clear that music can change listeners' emotional states, which, in turn, may impact on their cognitive performance”. Saarikallio, in a 2010 study of emotional or mood regulation through musical engagement by adults, found that participants of all ages used music for “happy mood maintenance”, often expressively engaging with the music by increasing volume, singing, playing along, or dancing. Interviewees reported using background music to create a pleasant atmosphere, whether as an independent activity or to accompany any other activity, “making it more enjoyable and helping to maintain or enhance the current, positive mood” (p. 312). In addition, participants reported using music to energize themselves or psych themselves up for a particular activity, such as sports activities, cleaning, and partying. As Croom (2014) reports, Pates et al. (2003) studied the effects of self-selected background music on shooting performance and flow of netball players, and found that “participants indicated that the intervention helped them to control both the emotions and cognitions that impacted upon their performance,” that “all three participants exhibited improvements in performance during the intervention,” and that “two of the three participants also showed increases in flow during the intervention, which suggests that in some players, flow may be induced using music interventions” (pp. 415, 424). Both musical performance and musical listening then can contribute greatly to engagement in both music- and non-music-related tasks.

2.3 Music and positive relationships

Extensive research exists showing the social benefits of musical engagement. Music affords particular opportunities for experiencing interpersonal synchrony, which has numerous positive effects such as increased rapport, cooperation, social-cognitive functioning, and self-esteem (see, for example, Lumsden, Miles & Macrae, 2014). Children involved in joint musical activities have been observed to experience enhanced empathy (Kirschner and Tomasello, 2010). Studies on adult musical engagement have revealed the power of music to promote

connection and communication with others, with participants either discovering these benefits through participation, or creating musical opportunities in order to experience positive relationships with liked or respected peers (see for example Faulkner & Davidson, 2004; Ford & Davidson, 2003).

Croom (2014) points to a review by Koelsch (2013) of the social functions of music, where the latter suggested that “when playing music in a group, individuals have contact with other individuals, engage in social cognition, participate in co-pathy (the social function of empathy), communicate, coordinate their actions, and cooperate with each other, leading to increased social cohesion,” and that “the ability of music to increase social cohesion and strengthen interindividual attachments was probably an important function of music in human evolution” (p. 204). An action research project, “Rhythm for Life”, conducted at the Royal College of Music, London, recruited adults over the age of 50 for three separate, 10-week programmes of one-to-one, small-group or larger-group musical lessons, and conducted a qualitative study via semi-structured interviews with a selection of participants (Perkins and Williamon, 2014). Interviewees reported important social benefits of participation, for example:

I know some people, I met people, and you, the teacher and the organizer and the people from your group . . . maybe I meet them again, I feel that I now know some people in London because before that almost I don't know anybody here, and that is a great positive thing in my life being in touch with other people. (p. 559)

“Enhanced social interactions” was one of six themes identified in interpreting the data, along with “subjective experiences of pleasure and musically-nuanced engagement in day-to-day life” (tying in with the sections on “music and positive emotion” and “music and engagement”, above); fulfilment of musical ambition (related to the section on “music and meaning”, below); and ability to make music and self-satisfaction through musical progress (related to the section on “music and accomplishment”, below). The authors claim, “the article lays an important foundation in arguing for the role of learning music in older adulthood as a means of enhancing subjective wellbeing”. This claim seems to be borne out by viewing the results of their study in the context of the PERMA framework.

Returning to Saarikallio's (2010) findings, it seems that music listening could be useful in promoting positive relationships in several ways. Using background music to create a positive atmosphere can provide a welcoming, inclusive, or safe space for relating, whilst using

signature strengths such as appreciation of beauty and love. Additionally, music listening for self-regulation (another signature strength) could be of huge benefit to interpersonal relationships by allowing an individual to process or discharge their negative or otherwise unwanted emotions alone rather than venting to a partner, family member, co-worker, or friend. Music's evocation of shared, positive memories was found to provide a “calming and comforting atmosphere of safety and acceptance”. A 2011 study of musical engagement at festivals by Packer and Ballantyne also reported finding that “the social facet of the music festival experience contributed to social well-being, particularly in relation to . . . ‘Social Integration’, ‘Social Acceptance’ and ‘Social Actualization’ components” (p. 7). A 73-year-old female participant on the 2013 “Rhythm for Life” programme talked about social support and co-operation within the group: “The thing is, we could help one another and we could actually sort of hear when somebody had gone wrong and you could actually communicate” (p. 559). It is evident that group musical engagement provides clear opportunities for developing interpersonal signature strengths such as social intelligence, teamwork, kindness and leadership in the development and maintenance of positive relationships.

2.4 Music and meaning

Seligman (2011) defines meaning as “belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self” (p. 12). Music research to date has focused more on emotional response to - and, to a lesser extent, engagement with music - than on a sense of meaning engendered by music listening or performance. However, Saarikallio's (2010) study offered up some insights, namely that, for participants, the meaningfulness of music increased generally with age and particularly during times of hardship or difficult life experience, “due to its ability to comfort, co-experience, distract, heal and empower”.

Lamont (2009) links meaning to formation of identity, illustrating the use of musical experience and taste in the search for identity by a study participant: “He is linking his own sense of identity as an authentic music fan to a premeditated experience which evoked a state of euphoria, comparing himself with others who are not “true” fans”. For individuals whose sense of meaning is strongly community-oriented, group musical engagement affords opportunities for developing a sense of meaning, whether through attendance of social music events such as gigs or festivals, or performance within a musical group. Karlsen and Brandstrom (2008) found that

music festivals “provide a variety of settings that allow a type of construction of meaning that has impact on the audience's actions and understanding of themselves”. Croom (2014) reports the following findings by Hays (2005):

The data revealed that music was an important part of many informants' lives and through music they often gave meaning to life experiences. Music provided ways for defining and redefining their self-identity, knowing and understanding emotions, and maintaining personal well-being. The data confirmed that most of the participants used music as a symbol for defining their own sense of self and identity. Music was a symbolic representation of who the participants were and how they might like to be perceived by others. (p. 29)

Participants such as Donald, Mildred, Fred, and Noreen, who were in their mid-nineties, believed their well-being and good health was largely attributed to their interest and involvement in music. Music provided the participants with ways of being interested and motivated in life. For example, Mildred described music in her life as giving her “meaningfulness” and felt that she had a purpose and that “each day was worth living”. This was largely because she plays and practices the piano as often as she can and draws much pleasure from music. (p. 30)

Davidson (2011) reports the thoughts of a female study participant about her experience of singing in a choir:

Expressing through being in the music is very powerful. It is another way of being. It permits you to be together with everyone in the music – part of the harmony, like one whole thing. But, you're also independent. So in music you can be small and big, in different ways to the whole.

As in the earlier section on music and engagement, curation, creation or enjoyment of musical content at a specific event can provide a sense of meaning both for those providing the musical content and those experiencing it. Musical experiences provide meaningful opportunities for engaging signatures strengths such as creativity, curiosity, appreciation of beauty and excellence and spirituality. Music then, is both a direct source of meaning and a contributor to a sense of meaning in secondary ways.

2.5 Music and accomplishment

Accomplishment, in the PERMA model, is described as “often being pursued for its own sake, even when it brings no positive emotion, no meaning, and nothing in the way of positive relationships”. Seligman states:

I fully recognise that [a life dedicated to accomplishment for the sake of accomplishment] is almost never seen in its pure state . . . People who lead the achieving life are often absorbed in what they do, they often pursue pleasure avidly and they feel positive emotion (however evanescent) when they win, and they may win in the service of something larger.

Nonetheless, instances of accomplishment for accomplishment's sake do exist; he cites Robert White's “heretical” 1959 article on motivation which argued that “rats and people often acted simply to exert mastery over the environment”, crediting it for his decision to include accomplishment as a discrete element within the well-being model.

In Western culture, musical mastery and accomplishment is often viewed as a rarity to be experienced by the relatively few. Davidson (2011) claims that:

Many of us are fearful of musical participation in Western cultures because of a lack of strong . . . musical experiences. The experiences themselves fulfil psychological needs for competency, social relatedness, and personal autonomy, which can offer the sufficient and necessary conditions for positive wellbeing and health. (p. 65)

In a section called “Insights from Africa”, she reports John Messenger's work with the Anang Ibibo tribe in West Africa, in the 1950s to 1990s. Paraphrasing Messenger, Davidson says:

Try as he might, he could not find a person who was not musical; that is, everyone in the tribe demonstrated an understanding of their specific musical practices, being able to generate appropriate manipulations of musical dynamics, tempo, pitch, and phrasing in performances, thus demonstrating a culturally sensitive musicality; also all members of the community were competent as players and dancers. (p. 66)

Davidson further highlights research into musical skills acquisition which has shown that thousands of hours of deliberate practice are needed to develop professional competence in playing complex musical instruments such as the Western violin or piano (Sloboda, Davidson, Howe & Moore, 1996; Davidson et al., 1997), and states that “on that basis alone, it is easy to see why so many individuals raised in a contemporary Western cultural context might not engage long enough to achieve performance competency”.

Davidson et al. (1998) and McPherson and Davidson (2006) found that certain conditions encourage musical skill development in Western cultures, such as familial and social support, and sufficient opportunities for formal and informal performance. Those who do engage with music learning can enjoy a great sense of accomplishment, provided the right learning strategies are engaged. The length of time commonly accepted for developing professional competence has been given above, but accomplishment in musical performance depends not just on the hours of effort and practice invested, but the quality of the learning and practice strategies employed. Hallam (1995) examined differences in practice strategies between novice and professional musicians. Her study found that professionals showed high awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and tailored their practice sessions accordingly. When attempting a new piece, they would identify difficult passages and use an arsenal of strategies to work through them. Novices, in contrast, tended to play pieces of music in their entirety, returning to the beginning if a mistake was made, rather than working on correction. In short, the more accomplished the player, the more goal-oriented and structured the practice methods engaged. Hallam's 2012 follow-up study further discovered that the use of self-monitoring aids such as metronomes and recordings of practice increased with participants' achieved grade level, whilst ineffective strategies for practice decreased. These factors also predicted exam success in students.

What accomplishment means to each individual is of course highly personal. For a student attempting to gain a place at a conservatory, succeeding in that goal could be a great accomplishment. For someone who had never engaged in music before, “taking the plunge” in learning a new instrument or joining a choir could in itself be a meaningful accomplishment. With sufficient opportunities, support and strategies making use of signature strengths such as perseverance, love of learning, self-regulation and perspective, musical activities and goals can afford rich opportunities for accomplishment, as part of a flourishing life.

2.6 Conclusion

In this review, claims have been made for the importance of and opportunities afforded by musical engagement in the development of Seligman's five elements of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement (PERMA). The review drew from extant literature on music and well-being, and from literature which also championed

music as a vehicle for specifically increasing the five PERMA elements. Whilst there are inherent physical and mental health risks in any activity practiced to excess, there are clear, empirically-supported benefits to be accrued from healthy engagement with musical activity. Examples of such healthy musical engagement have been shared above. It is hoped that the research project will confirm and highlight the potential of musical learning for increasing well-being and vice versa, as well as exploring the usefulness of the PERMA model for evaluation thereof.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary decisions and limitations

A methodology was required that would afford me the same flexibility as I am used to employing in the customised training interventions I design and deliver, to ensure that I could adapt to meet the emerging needs of participants and myself, and respond to new opportunities. It needed also to be sufficiently robust to allow the structured data gathering and analysis necessary for validation of results.

In a feedback session with my supervisor, it was suggested I explore action research as a suitable methodology. Indeed, it proved ideal for the project, if somewhat challenging to report in a master's thesis due to a divergence from more traditional notions of validity and replicability in ongoing debate about how best to ensure quality of research (Heikkinen, Jong, & Vanderlinde, 2016), the importance of including justifications for methodological decisions alongside the facts of what was done (and not done), and reflections about learning throughout, as shown in this section. That challenge, however, has been invaluable in helping me develop reflexivity about my professional practice, and has shaped my thinking about how to monitor quality of my coaching and training work beyond generation of academic reports on their impact.

As an umbrella term, action research encompasses methodologies that vary in approach and application but share certain key elements: the identification of an area of focus, data collection and analysis, and deliberate action in response to findings, carried out by the researcher in an iterative manner. Importantly, it grounds the research in the values practitioner researchers seek to embody in their life and work, allowing for some negotiation of values with participants. Furthermore, it centres the practical application of created knowledge:

Action research has always been understood as committed to a humanistic conception of knowledge creation, specifically for personal and social justice and practice improvement; and its methods enable researchers to realise these commitments through explaining publicly how they try to live their values in their practice. (McNiff, 2015, p. 1)

Various models have been developed since Lewin (1946), in a paper purportedly coining the term “action research”, described a “spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of

planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action” (p. 38). From modern conceptual frameworks developed from this starting-point, I selected Sagor's (2005) four-stage process of clarifying vision and targets, articulating theory, implementing action and collecting data, and reflecting on the data and planning informed action, as a suitable framework to adopt in development of the project.

3.2 Data collection

As the primary purpose was to explore the integration of elements of the project rather than test individual impacts, a quasi-experimental approach was preferred to creating a control group. I used a mixed-method approach to data collection by use of personality and skill assessment scales, scored before and after the project couple with post-project interviews, but true data analysis was solely qualitative. The sample size being insufficient for meaningful quantitative analysis, questionnaire responses were used to provide an element of methodological triangulation and opportunities for discussion, being referred to in post-test interviews.

3.3 Ethics and confidentiality

Informed consent was obtained after first describing the aims and purposes of the project, and how information would be gathered and presented. Given the often deeply personal nature of coaching work, I informed the participants that the content of coaching discussions outside of the immediate project remit would be entirely confidential. As is standard in my coaching work, I reminded them of confidentiality regularly, and I also explained that I do not provide coaching on financial, legal, or medical matters, as I am not qualified to do so.

This was a non-clinical project; I do not coach persons with severe behaviour, mood, or substance use disorders. However, I was prepared to encounter some level of mental health distress among participants, given the focus on well-being. Additionally, language issues and unfamiliarity with the role of a coach might have meant some respondents to my recruitment efforts thought they would be receiving therapy. In my experience, coaching is sometimes sought by people in distress who do not want the perceived stigma of seeking therapy or counselling, and it has been important to me to be ready to recommend a client or potential

client talk instead to their doctor or a professional therapist or counsellor, if issues are raised that are outside the coaching remit. I have on occasion coached (pro bono) clients who are also in therapy or in regular contact with their doctor about less severe issues of anxiety or even low-level depression, on the basis that my role is to help them set goals around behavioural and lifestyle changes as an adjunct to clinical support by qualified professionals in that field. This has worked well, with clients experiencing tangible progress in various areas of functioning.

I have also undertaken Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)¹ so as to be able to respond effectively if a client, or any other person, were to discuss or show signs of acute distress. (The ASIST model is a “first aid” approach aimed at keeping someone thinking of suicide safe and putting them in contact with the relevant, qualified health professionals for ongoing support.) In my participant group for this study, no participant reported suicidal thoughts, although one person who had been struggling with various issues told me during our post-project interview that “I think somehow [the coaching] saved me because I was going to a deep hole . . . I could have gone to a depression or, like, worse. I was not getting better before I met you”. We discussed her seeking therapy beyond the project. Another participant who found the project greatly beneficial went on to join a music therapy group at JYU after our project ended. One participant was already in a programme of therapy and used the coaching sessions partly to set goals around adherence to that work, without us discussing specific content of the therapy programme. Those three participants reported some of the most positive outcomes for the project.

I sought participant permission to use pseudonymised quotes from the post-test interviews in this thesis and any future published materials. They were given the option to select a name themselves, or to have me select one, which I would do in such a way as to represent participant nationality, in case that added interesting context (for example, examining differing attitudes of participants from collective versus individualistic societies). However, given the small group size and the local nature of the project, with us having been witnessed entering rooms together weekly with kanteles in busy venues where some of the participants were known to others, as well as performing publicly, I later decided not to use any names or identifiers which would tie partial responses together.

¹ <https://livingworks.net/asist>

Where online forms were used, no email addresses were collected and participants were instead asked to use the first two letters of their first name and of their surname as an identifier, to protect anonymity. Paper versions of questionnaires had first name only and were stored in my home.

I created a private Facebook group for me to share resources and information with participants, and to conduct time-slot polls for scheduling coaching sessions. They were free to add their own resources, but I did not use this group to elicit any confidential information. Whilst a participant said that using Facebook as a platform was helpful, I have my own misgivings about privacy and ethics as regards social media platforms and would consider other options in future.

The public performance was optional, although I encouraged people to take part. Some photographs of us playing were taken with permission and shared on social media with permission.

Throughout the project I had the opportunity to observe participants' experience in the group sessions and explore that further in one-to-one coaching sessions, alongside other topics that they chose to work on. Written field notes during the group coaching and music-making sessions were impracticable given the hands-on nature of the class. I raised observations in coaching sessions and referred to these in post-project interviews where relevant. I kept written notes (with permission) of coaching sessions and the interviews, as is standard, using first name only as the content was enough for me to identify who was speaking. These files were kept as local files on my phone and laptop, both of which are password-protected.

3.4 Participants

I aimed to recruit 8-12 adult participants with little to no musical training but with an interest in trying to learn or develop musical skills alongside learning evidence-based well-being techniques and one-to-one coaching for their personal, business or career development. I created flyers to outline the project and explain the potential personal, educational and cultural value of the project, highlighting the monetary value of the coaching being provided for free, as an incentive. In case I needed to deliver the project in more than one language to meet my recruitment target, I translated these into French (in which I am sufficiently fluent to have been

able to deliver the project) and also into Finnish, in case it attracted more attention in viewers' native language, and also to highlight the Finnish cultural nature of the project. (See Appendix 1.) After my initial planning session with the staff of host venue, Monikulttuurikeskus Gloria (Gloria Multicultural Centre), they shared digital and print versions of my flyers and the programme to some key calendars. I posted flyers in the university and I shared them on relevant groups and profiles on social media, with requests for readers to pass them on to anyone who might be interested.

I purposively sampled the responses to exclude anyone currently engaged in regular music-making or full-time musical education, with the exception of one respondent who was currently involved in singing activity but was quite concerned about her well-being. I did not want to exclude her from a project that I believed could help her, so I admitted her to the cohort. I made the decision to expand the criteria to include people who had up to six years of previous musical training but were not currently active in music-making, wishing to explore the same issues of engagement and well-being through that lens.

Ten participants (female=9; age range=24-51 years old, musical training in years=0 (4), 0.5 (1), 2 (3), 6-9 (1)) took part in this project. It was an international group with participants from Finland, China, Colombia, Germany, India, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. All but one had a sufficient level of English fluency to take part, or were native speakers; two participants from an East Asian country were a husband who did not speak English and his wife who did. This added some difficulty for him and for myself, and more work for her in translating for us, but it also brought opportunities to explore music and other artistic media as communication, discussed below.

An international group could have encompassed many cultural differences affecting attitudes to well-being and learning, not least in terms of collectivist versus individualist attitudes. Whilst a thorough investigation of cultural attitudes to learning, well-being and goal achievement was beyond the scope of this study, it was important for me to be aware of cultural issues affecting participants' and my experience of the project, including my own unconscious bias. To that end, I enrolled in a module in intercultural and multilingual communication, which provided opportunities for dialogue and reflection ahead of and alongside this study. Individual coaching sessions allowed for the perspective-taking necessary to identify and begin to reduce bias, a

necessarily ongoing endeavour that could further be explored through future iterations of the action research spiral.

3.5 Pre- and post-project questionnaires

I considered various measures of personality traits and competencies to be used as a potential indicator of change for each participant, selecting the PERMA-Profiler, the Big Five Inventory (BFI), the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index (Gold-MSI²), and the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS). The group was too small for the results to be useful from a quantitative point of view, but they would provide a good discussion point at our post-project, semi-structured interview, helping participants and I assess the impact of the project on well-being and other outcomes. I was also interested in exploring the use of such scales in an intercultural setting, and made the decision to use English-language versions only, for consistency.

Participants were given printed copies of the pre-project questionnaires to fill out, in the order of PERMA, Big Five Inventory, SWLS, Gold-MSI, on the first night of the project, so that I could be on hand to explain any unclear language. Nonetheless, there were some answers that we later realised had been incorrectly interpreted by some, highlighting the downside of my decision not to use translated versions of the scales. For example, question 41 of the Big Five Inventory is “I am someone who . . . has few [emphasis added] artistic interests”. Two participants with English as a second language interpreted that as “a few [emphasis added] artistic interests”, which is arguably subtly different in meaning. Another non-native English participant had interpreted “lonely” on the PERMA scale as being “alone”, which only came to light when I asked at post-test interview why she thought that score had increased. She replied that her high score was a reflection of the fact she was far from home and relatives, and was a simple statement of fact, “not a negative thing”.

We met in the Gloria Multicultural Centre and had refreshments, comfortable seats and cushions, and tables for filling out the forms, but it was nonetheless tiring for the group, especially those operating in a second language. As a result, I instructed them to leave the Gold-

² Thanks to Dr. Daniel Müllensiefen of Goldsmiths, University of London, for use of the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index scale for the project.

MSI for the time being and shared an online link for completing it after the session. (Unfortunately, one participant misunderstood and did not complete the Gold-MSI pre-test.) I also decided not to use the VIA-IS at all, so as not to add another layer of complexity for participants.

3.6 Musical instrument(s)

In the initial planning stage of my action research spiral, I had considered whether to recruit a teacher, and which instrument they could teach. Although a performer of various instruments, I had not previously taught any. The idea of singing was appealing given my research into the well-being effects of choral singing, but I was concerned about the ethical implications of selecting a vocal teacher, given the possibility of vocal damage if less-than-optimal technique was taught. My supervisor suggested the Finnish kantele, which was ideal for the project purposes: it is, in its five-string form, an accessible and portable instrument for beginner learning, with the added advantage of being pleasant to listen to at any level of ability, unlike some more strident choices, such as the Irish tin whistle.

It also provided an opportunity of cultural enrichment, both for immigrants like myself who might not have encountered the instrument before, but perhaps would be familiar with similar variants from our own cultures, and for Finnish participants who may not have played the instrument in a long time and could perhaps develop new appreciation for it as adults, especially through the eyes of foreign peer group members.

In order to facilitate participants' learning of the instrument, I requested a demonstration by a lecturer in the Musica department and recommendations of folk tunes I could share, in the spring preceding the autumn project. I later decided to enrol on his autumn folk music module, playing kantele and studying rune-song. This gave me an opportunity to share resources he was using with our class with my participants, such as performances of the folk songs we were studying by well-known Finnish musical artists, and the mythology or cultural context of the musical pieces. It was also a decision to put myself in the role of student in a challenging environment at the same as my participants were facing their new challenges. The classes were held in Finnish, and although my lecturer and my peers were kind enough to translate important information into English when needed, I was otherwise relying on new, basic Finnish skills to

participate in the class, particularly with the singing. It was a good reminder of the challenge of participating in a second language, to help me empathise with my participants and be mindful of minimising the impact of language issues.

For participant instruments, I was prepared to source and approach a kantele manufacturer to see if they would loan or sponsor instruments, but the folk music lecturer kindly granted me permission to use the music department's kanteles for learning sessions on premises, and even to take one home for practice. An ex-student of the Music, Mind and Technology programme generously loaned me a variety of kanteles for take-home use by participants, as did Kari Dahlblom of the Palokan Pelimannitalo Kantele Museum in Jyväskylä. I was able to find and purchase a second-hand instrument from a user on Reddit (<https://reddit.com>)

3.7 Group learning sessions

Socio-cultural theories of learning and development in recent years have positioned learning not just as the individual's active construction and generation of knowledge, but also as social participation in socio-culturally determined knowledge communities, involving the construction of identities. (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Sfard, 1998; Wenger, 1998). Weekly group learning sessions incorporated a number of elements, outlined below.

3.7.1 Environment

Various theories propose that individual well-being is positively affected by congruence between one's personal value hierarchies and the values prevailing in one's social environments (e.g., Feather, 1975; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Segall, 1979). For participants who valued novelty, openness to change and curiosity, this project afforded value congruence by offering an opportunity for learning new skills on a, to the immigrants at least, novel instrument. Equally, for those who valued tradition, the focus on folk music rooted in Finnish mythology may have contributed to value congruence, both for Finns and for immigrants who could appreciate the focus on the tradition of their newly- or temporarily-adopted home. The extent to which well-being is affected by value congruence with a given environment may be positively associated with how important that environment is to one's self-identity (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). Although I did not explicitly measure participant values with the VIA-IS in

this iteration, values nonetheless emerged in coaching conversations and post-project interviews, and indeed in the fact that participants self-selected into this learning project after reading about the various elements involved on the recruitment flyers. In future iterations of this project, I would like to explore the idea of values and value congruence in more depth.

Group learning sessions were held over eight weeks on Tuesday evenings from October 27, 2015, culminating in a public performance event on December 15 to challenge participants to expand their “comfort zones” and experience the positive stress and rewards of public performance in a relatively informal setting. The Gloria Monikulttuurikeskus (Gloria Multicultural Centre) had been suggested as a venue by a lecturer in the Musica Department, and proved eminently suitable given its goal of increasing cultural integration in Jyväskylä and its warm and welcoming premises in downtown Jyväskylä. We met at the Gloria centre in weeks one, two, four and eight.

The practical benefits of meeting in their Persia room were that it was well-lit, colourful and comfortable, with various types of seating, floor cushions and tables, and had kitchen facilities, allowing for snacks and refreshments during our early evening time-slot. It was a good location for participants living or working downtown. Furthermore, I was pleased that it gave participants the chance to become frequent visitors to a cultural hub of the community; although I did not explicitly discuss this aspect at the time, in hindsight, I feel it adds credibility to one's sense of oneself as a musician to regularly carry a musical instrument to and from a place where music is created and performed, and play it there alongside peers. Embodied cognition, that is, the experience of self-conception in terms of dynamic interactions between body, mind, and environment (Anderson, 2003), was central to the learning experience in terms of participants developing dexterity in playing their instrument and how that would shape their sense of being or becoming a skilful self.

In week three, I held our group session in the motion capture (MoCap) lab of the Musica Department, as my folk class had an end-of-term performance in that venue that same evening. The MoCap lab was where the kanteles were stored and where my folk music lectures (and others) were held. This was a good opportunity to showcase the Musica Department's state-of-the-art technology to the group, and discuss areas of music psychological research conducted therein. It also had the practical advantage of audio-visual technology, so I was able to project

videos of performances of our studied folk tunes, pictures of relevant Finnish mythology, and so on. However, it was somewhat more austere as a learning environment, having quite cold light and being a large, sparse space. Whilst I hoped participant self-perception as music learners might be positively impacted by learning in the same space as university-level music students, I did not want them to feel intimidated by the formal learning environment. In my experience working with adult learners, some are put off by environments which evoke negative memories from school. In an effort to strike a balance, therefore, I brought cushions for sitting in a circle on the floor, which helped it feel more informal. This was a deliberate choice to prioritise subjective well-being during the session over learning; it may be, however, that a more formal setting could have increased learning through association in participants' minds with learning experiences and outcomes.

Following that evening's session, most of the group stayed on to watch the concert by my folk music class. This was, I felt, a good opportunity for them to imagine themselves in performance mode ahead of our end-of-project performance, observing other music students take to the stage. The fact that I was singing in a foreign language was, I hoped, a small point of shared experience with the majority of my participants, who were communicating in a second language in our group. Additionally, it was a musical listening experience for enjoyment, with the added context that some of the tunes and the kantele were now familiar. Those who attended expressed their enjoyment to me on the night and in comments in our private Facebook group, after the event.

On week five, we moved back to the Musica department since many participants had accepted an invitation to attend a jazz concert with me there that evening. The music therapy clinic across the hall from the MoCap lab became available to us, so I moved our group into that room. Aside from being a smaller space with more comfortable lighting, it was of course well stocked with melodic and percussive instruments, which gave us more musical options to explore, once participants had attained a level of comfort and skill with the kantele. Again, I brought cushions for sitting on the carpeted floor, according to participant preference. The music therapy room also had audio-visual equipment, and I was able to use recordings of nature sounds for our mindfulness meditations, as well as projecting sheet music or notes on theory on the large screen. The university location was convenient for those who were students at the university or living nearby. We returned to this learning space for weeks six and seven to continue using the

additional instruments, before our final session and performance in the Gloria centre in week eight.

Another environmental aspect of our learning sessions was the time of year, and the weather. I was concerned that participants' moods might suffer as the weather became more inclement and the nights darker. When asked what she did not like about the project or what she would improve, at final interview, one participant said,

I think for me it was just most challenging that the majority of it was in November, like the darkest month of the year, and so I was so tired by the time it commenced.

However, most of the group reported finding group sessions beneficial for mental health, an enjoyable transition from the work or study day to going home. One student participant told me,

For me it was even better that it was night-time, you know, 'cause after coaching session I felt better, like, I mean emotionally, and you know this kantele it was giving me positive energy, even though it's, like, very dark outside and the weather is so bad . . . from that point of view it was a good, like, fresh, breath!

Finally, my own mood and interpersonal behaviour in the sessions was important for client success. A coach's pleasant mood is a strong predictor of so-called dominant-friendly behaviour and is positively related to ratings of the working alliance by the client (Ianiro and Kauffield, 2014). The care taken over the ambience of the coaching space was as important for my own mood maintenance and emotional regulation as it was for the participants. I used bergamot essential oil inhalation as a mood elevator and energiser (Watanabe et al., 2015) and found the initial mindfulness exercises useful for self-calming. However, some sessions were nonetheless a little frantic when everyone needed kantele tuning before we could start (and I only had one key), or when people were returning after absence and some catch-up needed to be managed. This was remarked upon by two participants at post-project interview, including one who was there for respite from busy-ness, so that was something I could have managed better. I could, for example, have used the tuning as the focus for a mindful listening exercise.

3.7.2 Group coaching

The first group coaching session included introductions, sharing of aims and goals (mine and participants'), and the designation of the group as a shared space founded on confidentiality and

trust. The participant who was unable to attend the first session introduced herself and her aims and goals in the privacy Facebook group I created for the project.)

Each weekly group session began with simple breathing exercises and mindfulness exercises in order for participants and myself to achieve a relaxed but alert state, and, after the initial session, discussion with participants about their progress, challenges and accomplishments since the last session, as well as general well-being topics (such as ideas about healthy eating). I encouraged the group to reflect on and discuss how they could transfer their new skills to other areas of their life, and vice versa, a topic that was explored in more depth in our one-to-one sessions. I also discussed brain plasticity, and the impact of teacher feedback in childhood education experiences on a person's perception of themselves as a learner.

For sessions at the Gloria centre, participants were told to get coffee, tea or water at any point they liked. Refreshments were not allowed inside the Musica rooms, but there were kitchen facilities on the floor above if needed. Throughout the sessions I was observing participants closely to gauge their engagement and levels of comfort or frustration, inviting feedback on how they were finding pace, variety and complexity. On a few occasions, I split the group into sub-groups to encourage social bonding and enjoyable skill pairings (with participants either being at a similar skill level, or one helping another catch up from missed sessions). However, these were infrequent and short, given that the sessions were only two hours long and were quite structured.

3.7.3 Introduction to the kantele

A degree of choice coupled with personal responsibility has been found to enhance active participation and well-being (Langer & Rodin, 1976), and can compensate for a feeling of lack of power (Inesi et al., 2011). I invited participants to select a kantele from the range I had procured, highlighting the generosity of the various donors and the responsibility for the care of each instrument before its safe return at the end of the project. Some opted to swap instruments after the first couple of weeks, based on practical considerations (e.g. weight, with some participants cycling to and from the venue), or musical preference; whilst most were five-string models, others were larger and more elaborate, and one was a *piccolo* which a participant was particularly fond of for its tone.

Through my participation in the folk music class, I had experienced the pragmatic approach to musical learning typical of Finland, as described by Antti Juvonen (Kubik, 2017):

The musical experience can be found at the heart of the pedagogical approach. We place the pupils in front of percussion instruments and we encourage them to play and sing in order to understand music not as an abstraction, but rather through the practice and the sensations it awakens. Acting to feel and to understand, even before integrating theoretical knowledge, represents the principle of our method. (para. 13)

With this approach in mind, I invited participants first to explore the feel and sound of the instrument, showing positions for holding the kantele, different methods of sound production (plucking, strumming) and finger-picking options, encouraging participants to explore the instruments before beginning to learn our first piece of music. Early and often, I expressed the idea of “no such thing as a wrong note”, expressed in various ways by many well-known Jazz musicians, as well as the idea that by labelling “butterflies in the stomach” feelings as “excitement” rather than “nerves” (a cognitive re-appraisal task), we can help prevent becoming overwhelmed by nerves.

3.7.4 Set pieces

I selected two Finnish folk tunes, Konevitsan Kirkonkellot and Karhun Peijaispolska, to be the main focus for the musical learning, with the kantele part of Sibelius' Lullaby for Violin and Kantele as an additional piece if time permitted its study, or if more experienced players needed something to move on to (one did use that piece). I discussed flexibility in musical interpretation, showing participants how to change the tuning between D major and D minor, having them play each piece in both and discussing the difference in emotion suggested by these modalities. I also showed them pentatonic tuning, the predominant scale used in East Asian music. I felt that this was one way to appreciate the cultural diversity in the group, and particularly could serve as a bridge to the non-English-speaking Asian participant, making him feel more included and represented in the group. I was gratified when he then shared a video of a performer from his home country playing a native harp, in our private Facebook group. I also shared the progressive rock version of Konevitsan Kirkonkellot by Piirpauke with the group, knowing from the Gold-MSI pre-questionnaire that rock was his favourite musical genre. I added other performance videos to a playlist which I shared with the group for their consideration³. With more time, we could have explored other scales and rhythms from participants' home countries.

3.7.5 Learning by ear

I focused on learning by ear at the first two sessions, having participants sing and clap the melodies to assist in learning, alongside playing them on the kantele. I encouraged them to consider the “shape” of the music, using hand gestures to demonstrate higher and lower pitches whilst singing the tunes. I also asked them to practice the respective finger movements off the kantele, in the air or on a surface such as a table-top, to focus on the muscle memory. I broke the tunes into smaller chunks and discussed the importance of repetition for building the neural connections commonly referred to as “muscle memory”, and particularly, the importance of identifying problematic areas of the music, isolating them, and playing them slowly enough to ensure correctness before attempting to speed them up or reintegrate them into the larger piece.

3.7.6 Musical theory

My goal was to give participants a non-intimidating introduction to musical theory, stressing that explicit knowledge of theory was not necessary either to make or enjoy music. I highlighted how by the time we reach adulthood, if we have engaged in a lot of musical listening, we will already have absorbed some basic tenets of music theory as they are commonly expressed in the genres we listen to. (Bobby McFerrin gave a wonderful demonstration of this at the World Science Festival “Notes & Neurons: In Search of the Common Chorus” event in 2009³, in which he elicited a musical response from the audience by jumping in intervals across the stage, providing some cue notes from a pentatonic scale and allowing the audience to intuit the missing notes, which they did successfully.)

I started sharing some basic information from week three onwards, about note names (highlighting those relevant to our kanteles' two main scales of D major and D minor), timing, crotchets versus quavers (or quarter-notes versus eighth-notes), rests, and sharps, using a mixture of my own printed resources (shared in the Appendices) and by projecting a website I had identified as a good resource, <https://musictheory.net>, onto the large screen. The link was shared with those who were keen to explore further at home. Ahead of the fifth session, I transcribed and sent participants sheet music for our pieces, telling them that even if they did not yet read music, if they paid attention to the shapes of the notation and matched the tune they

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ne6tB2KiZuk>

had learned to the symbols representing it, it would start to make sense. I encouraged them to explore this for themselves before we went through it together in class.

Feedback from participants (discussed in the following section) broadly highlighted the success of this pedagogical approach, with one participant remarking,

I was think, okay, there was, like, plenty of theory and you know it will just bury my interest if I go for this musical theory, and I want to really play this musical instrument before I learn the notes, but it turned out I can even play without learning so much theory and I can enjoy music without it. So, yeah, but when I actually made some [laughs] success in reading notes when we were doing some kantele sessions, I was, you know, so surprised that I read this right, and it was like WHAT?! I understand that! It's great! [laughs]

This common breakthrough experience in musical learning was exactly the type of result I sought to harness in subsequent coaching sessions, encouraging participants to consider where else they could achieve breakthroughs. This is discussed in the findings section.

However, a participant who was experiencing work burnout did not enjoy it, even though she had had some experience of reading music:

It was quite stressful to read the notes, it was too much for my brains. So, I really enjoyed learning by ear, it was joyful and so, but this reading the notes, they were too stressful for my brains, which are, already they were so overheated, or what can I say but. I didn't enjoy that.

This was an important reminder that sometimes a participant just does not have the capacity for a task at a given time, due to external factors, and that striving to complete a task may have a negative effect rather than positive one.

One learning modality I did not account for in group sessions, which I will be sure to include in future iterations, was learning by watching another's physical playing. Before our final performance, I did send a video recording of myself playing the two pieces, with the camera focused on my hands on the strings. However, this was quite late in the process, and it transpired in the post-project interviews that one participant had been trying to learn by watching others play. This I had not considered, and I could have arranged seating so as to facilitate that during the programme.

3.7.7 Musical perception

As one of my key goals was to engender awareness of human musicality, I discussed some areas of human musical perception in the group throughout our sessions. One piece of information I shared was that although many people consider themselves lacking in musicality, only an estimated 4% of the population suffer from congenital amusia (Kalmus & Fry, 1980). In fact, since I shared that research, Peretz and Vuhan (2017) conducted a 20,000-participant study of prevalence involving three objective tests and a questionnaire and showed that the prevalence is only 1.5%. For those who were interested in a deeper level of knowledge, I created a playlist of video lectures on auditory processing⁴, which I shared in our Facebook group.

3.7.8 Musical improvisation

My own experience of music education was heavily focused on classical music and playing from sheet music (piano, clarinet, tenor saxophone, singing), meaning that opportunities for expression were limited to expressive choices in dynamics and so on. As an adult, my performance confidence has suffered from a lack of improvisation experience. I perceive this as a major learning gap and wanted to build improvisation into this musical educational experience.

In the music therapy room, I was able to incorporate more instruments into our music-making sessions, once participants had achieved a level of comfort and ability with the kanteles. Whilst some participants opted to continue working on kantele skills, others were excited to experiment with other instruments and consider opportunities to develop their new or newly-revisited musical skills beyond the kantele. In our second session in that venue (week six), I split the group into smaller groups to do some more improvisation and composition. Two of the participants who were of similar age, one of them having had some years of musical learning in childhood, the other without but picking up kantele quickly, collaborated on a wonderful composition of kantele and piano.

Having discovered that some of the group were keen photographers (one a professional), I asked them in week seven to send me photos to use as prompts for improvisation, which I printed out

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peSLM4XObBE&list=PLZCkNwFcoTkk4Pi5qZ2UIcRKreQhI1txm>

for the group. In this way, I hoped to achieve increased social bonding, through reflection and discussion of people's artistic work; a playfulness and creativity that was a change in direction from focusing on “correctly” reproducing a particular piece of music; and increased awareness of integration of various art forms for richer expression. One of them was wanted my participant who did not speak English, whom I particularly wanted to have multiple ways to express himself to the group. His wife, translating for him and me in our final interview, reported,

So, using the photo to express what you see and what you feel, he thought that part means a lot because it's not really about the skills, it's about, like, the feel. How you view and how do you express your feeling.

In fact, he said he enjoyed the improvisation most out of the elements of the project.

3.7.9 Music listening

In addition to music listening in our group sessions, participants were encouraged to increase musical listening in daily life, with discussion in one-to-one coaching sessions about music listening habits, and opportunities to attend concerts on the JYU campus (the folk class concert mentioned above and a jazz concert held in the Musica department after our week five session) and elsewhere in Jyväskylä.

3.7.10 At-home practice

Participants were encouraged to practice daily, being told that this was necessary for optimal learning as the neuronal wiring was done between practice sessions. I posted reminders about this in the Facebook group for the project, but I did not request daily reporting of practice either by communication to me or in a workbook or app, due to increasing pressure on participant schedules from university and work commitments. I relied, therefore, on participant feedback in individual and group coaching sessions to gauge how dedicated participants were being in practice. There was much variation between participants in terms of how much practice they reported, for example, one participant told me in coaching sessions that she was struggling to make time to practice due to university assignment commitments. Another said she had been practicing three or four nights a week for 30 to 40 minutes at a time, before becoming ill with flu for two weeks and feeling like she was falling behind. She described the rhythm of practice she had developed, and self-regulation of her routine:

I was really enjoying because I was having the rhythm of playing at home as well, 'cause it's something you have to consciously make yourself promise that I will do that, and once you get doing it, you don't skip a night but when you skip a couple of nights . . . [laughs]

To assist with at-home practice and catch-up, I shared recordings of our set pieces for participants to play along with.

3.7.11 Public performance

A public performance of our two main set pieces was arranged with and advertised by the Gloria centre on week eight of the project. We met for a final rehearsal and well-being session in a private room, in which I focused on a positive interpretation of performance nerves, enjoyment, and the “safety” of a group performance (telling participants that they were free to play chords they had learned rather than melodies, if they felt more comfortable). I wanted the performance to be an enjoyable challenge to finish our project. In the main room where we were to play, we were joined, by prior arrangement, by the musician who had so generously loaned us many of her own kantele collection. We were also joined impromptu by two men who played hand drums, which added a great new dimension to the performance, particularly for two participants who had expressed a love of drums in our coaching sessions. One participant referred to the drums again in our final interview,

I also like drums a lot of course, but I think that's more my Colombian part because our music is based in drums a lot, and it's really important . . . I think drums is a little, actually a lot, of base for music, the beat of the heart also.

For me, it was meaningful as it so perfectly continued what I had been inviting at my Sofa Sessions, for people to join in when they felt moved to do so and connect with strangers through the music. My favourite moment, captured on camera but not reproduced here, was at the end of the performance, with participants and myself beaming and one raising two fists into the air with a wide grin on her face.

3.7.12 Positive psychology intervention

The positive psychology intervention I chose was the daily gratitude exercise, in which participants noted three things they were grateful for each day and reflected on the causes of those things. Some found this easier than others, and feedback was mixed, as discussed in the next section. Although I had originally planned to use a workbook for participants to track this

and other practice efforts, I decided against that after the reaction of participants to the questionnaires on the first day, and feedback about the stress-releasing nature of the project, which I did not want to jeopardise. I knew this would mean less likelihood of successful habit formation, which was borne out, but I decided to prioritise participant comfort over habit. As noted in the introduction, it transpired that many participants did not want or feel able to practice the gratitude exercise every day, necessitating a change to the relevant initial research question.

3.8 Mindfulness practice

I began each group session with a mindfulness meditation, alternating between mindful breathing exercises, body scan meditations and meditations on a creative artefact, such as a nature photo projected on the screen in the music therapy lab or printed from participant-provided photos, recordings of nature sounds, or a musical stimulus such as a participant improvisation which the rest of us could use as a meditational focus. I anticipated that without formal tracking, there was a high likelihood that participants would not engage in daily mindfulness meditation, which was borne out in feedback. This is familiar to me from other mindfulness trainings, conducted as they are in a non-residential setting; people often report not having the time, even when encouraged to do short meditations. Without formal tracking, I shared an alternative strategy for increasing time spent in a mindful state, namely, approaching daily tasks with a mindful attitude, for example, mindful teeth-cleaning, walking, eating and dishwashing. I regularly asked the group how the mindfulness exercises were working for them, encouraging them to think about different ways to incorporate mindfulness into their daily life. Activities such as mindful teeth-cleaning and walking proved popular, as they have in other programmes I have run.

3.9 One-to-one coaching sessions

I conducted most coaching sessions in quiet, informal face-to-face settings, using cafes, bars and break-out areas in the Musica building at quiet times of day. We also had use of a quiet room in the Gloria centre on occasion. Other sessions were conducted in meeting rooms at participants' workplaces, and the rest over Skype, when meeting in person was not possible or the convenience of a Skype call was preferred by the client. During these client-led sessions,

participants were free to focus on any area of challenge or concern, which ranged from general health habits to job seeking or entrepreneurship, adapting to expatriate or immigrant life to interpersonal dynamics, study challenges to general organisational issues. I encouraged them to identify and apply what they were doing well in one area of life (including our project) to other areas.

The coaching sessions were similar to of semi-structured interviews, following up on previous session goals, agreeing future goals, and inquiring about the participant's experience of the project, which allowed me to constantly be gathering feedback to inform my action at following group sessions. Coaching conversations could be described as a process of moving from latent to semantic analysis of coachees' words, as the coach reflects back particular phrases and asks the coachee to clarify or examine the underlying meaning, making it explicit. In fact, given that in coaching sessions I am also constantly observing intonations, use of rhetoric, evidence of cultural or other biases, facial expressions, and other bodily gestures, drawing attention to these where I think it could add to discussion and encouraging exploration of changing meaning or affect by changing language used to describe experiences, these coaching sessions could perhaps be described as an informal type of discourse analysis. In terms of ongoing skills development and ideas for future research, this is an area I am keen to explore further.

One interesting deviation from the one-to-one format was the coaching sessions with the married couple from East Asia taking part in the programme. The wife of the couple was translating for the husband, and on occasion, he waited whilst we conducted her coaching session, although he was not able to understand at least the verbal content of our conversation. This was quite tiring for all three of us, but we were happy to take the extra time in order for the husband to be part of the project. With them living together as a married couple, it was a good opportunity for them and me to explore how a couple can practice mindfulness and positive psychology exercises together. For example, I suggested they hold hands and focus on mindfully observing each other's hand, to add a bonding dimension to the meditative practice. (I have found this to be effective in prior work.) They developed that into daily mindful hugs, which they enjoyed and continued after the project ended. I also suggested they might like to share their daily gratitude exercises with each other, and see how that changed the experience. This was not clearly enough communicated on my part, however, as they understood me to mean to share daily gratitude exercises only with each other, and to do so by expressing

gratitude to each other. The wife reported in the post-project that they found this difficult due to cultural values, further discussed in findings.

With regards to my values in action in my work, I try to hold and express unconditional regard and accurate empathy toward my clients (Rogers, 1951). My goals in coaching are to foster in my clients healthy self-esteem; high self-compassion (Neff, 2009); high self-efficacy; positive emotions for broadening and building (Fredrickson, 2011), coupled with an appreciation of the purpose of negative emotions; intrinsic motivation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985); and zeal for improvement (Thorndike, 1912), the latter being perhaps cyclical in nature, and balanced with acceptance and appreciation of present circumstances. I believe these to be foundational in effecting lasting well-being improvements, however, I have learned through this study the importance of recognising the bias inherent in such values, and to make them explicit to the client, as part of a possible negotiation of values. This is particularly important with clients from cultural backgrounds different from my own, as I have been reminded.

3.10 Post-project interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews around one month (mean=t+25.8; median=t+29.5) after the study had concluded, using a set of pre-determined questions to investigate impacts of various aspects of the programme and eliciting participant ideas for improvement. I shared my own thoughts for improvement in future projects of this kind, inviting participant responses on those, and followed up on any interesting points or issues participants raised in the interviews. I noted any interesting changes in pre- and post-test scores and explored whether the participant attributed such changes to aspects of the project or external factors. We also discussed goals and progress on life areas we had worked on in coaching sessions, and participant plans for the future. Interviews range in length from 24 to 65 minutes (mean=40.4).

Set interview questions used (with some rewording where required for comprehension) were:

- How do you feel your wellbeing has changed as a result of the project?
- How did the mindfulness specifically, impact you?

- How did the daily gratitude exercise, specifically, impact you?
- What impact did the coaching have on you?
- How did the kantele learning, specifically, impact you?
- How about performing in public - what did you learn from that experience?
- We did some learning by ear and some learning by reading notes - how did you find each approach?
- Do you think you will keep playing kantele?
- Are you considering learning any other instrument or learning to sing?
- Are you considering learning more music theory?
- What did you learn about yourself from the project?
- What did you like about the project?
- What did you dislike about the project, or what would you improve?
- What will you remember most?

The interviews were manually transcribed and analysed by means of qualitative thematic analysis, deductively, in terms of the PERMA framework, and inductively, from examination of the data for emergent themes. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2013) seven steps of thematic analysis, namely, transcription, reading and familiarisation, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalizing the analysis. The transcription stage was particularly onerous, given that I started by full verbatim transcription of the full interview content. I oscillated between doing this so as to have a complete record I could revisit versus focusing on points relevant to this particular analysis, to save time. After seeking advice from my supervisor, I transcribed only those points which I would be including in the text. Re-

listening to select those added to familiarisation with the data, which helped me form clearer pictures of participant experience, and increased my interest in using interpretative phenomenological analysis or discourse analysis in future research.

3.11 Validation

In the introduction to this text, I outlined my main process of validation, following Heikkinen et al.'s five principles. I have mentioned the use of questionnaires to provide an element of what I might consider internal methodological triangulation, by comparison with what participants reported in post-project interviews. However, this was limited in efficacy, due to sample size and the lack of control groups. For that reason, no quantitative analysis of questionnaire scores was performed, and no claims can or are being made as to external validity, from my use of them. As such, the questionnaire data is not included in this text.

One commonly used method of validation in action research is recruitment of a critical friend; a learning partner or colleague who can act as a sounding-board and impartial observer as the project progresses (Stenhouse, 1975). I chose not to formally invite someone to take on that role for three reasons: given the intensity of the project, I did not wish to burden anyone else with additional work, nor could I return the favour; given the high level of confidentiality I provided participants, I did not want to add the presence of another researcher or assistant in case it changed the dynamics; and, most importantly, I work independently “in the real world” and was piloting a project that I envisaged delivering independently in future. Whilst I have ideas for collaboration for larger versions of this project (particularly around the musical education part), I wanted to test my ability to successfully deliver the project on my own.

However, intra-faculty research proposal presentations during the planning stage allowed me to seek feedback from peers and faculty members ahead of commencement. These did function as “critical friend” opportunities, and one question by a student of the music therapy cohort gave me much to consider. He asked me why I wanted the learning to be accelerated, which, at the time, momentarily stymied me. I replied with the question “Why would you not want to learn more quickly, since you could get to the enjoyment stage more quickly and reap other benefits more quickly?” Our conversation did not change each other’s view, but I continued thinking about the value of speed in learning, and about slow food movements and my positive

opinion of those, and I began questioning whether speeding up learning would mean increased well-being or whether something would be lost. As it turned out, his question foreshadowed what became apparent in the early stages of the project, namely, that participants were not as interested in the speed of learning so much as the opportunity to relax doing something enjoyable. His acting as the “critical friend” in that instance, therefore, helped me be prepared to make the quick decision that I did to de-prioritise the acceleration aspect as part of a value negotiation with participants for this project. It has also led me to consider offering different versions or “tracks” of future projects, with people interested in faster skill acquisition having additional elements to, or different elements from, those interested in slower-paced enjoyment of the learning journey.

I did also seek and implement feedback from my thesis supervisor and other lecturers, Dr. Seligman and Dr. Müllinsiefen, and staff at the Gloria centre on topics including practical issues of data collection, music tuition and learning environments, to improve the coherence and quality of my research.

Had I encountered any sizeable challenges in the course of the project, I would have quickly sought additional advice, but there was nothing in the coaching element that was unusual or difficult, and practical delivery issues were small and surmountable. Critical feedback is not limited in any case to a critical friend. It encompasses my own reflection on the robustness of this project, including challenging my own assumptions and testing the validity of my claims dialectically, in conversation with participants in which I received or explicitly invited critical feedback, in group or one-to-one settings.

4 FINDINGS

In coaching sessions, I invite a coachee to investigate their own practice by active listening and reflecting my perception of their beliefs and behavioural patterns, for their consideration. In parallel, in real time or in retrospect, I reflect on my own beliefs and behavioural patterns and how they affected our working dynamic. This project extended the opportunity for myself and participants to investigate our practices, with the regular group coaching allowing for rich discussion with multiple points of view about learning, mindfulness, gratitude, and well-being, in different cultural contexts. A focus on a shared task that was purposeful and allowed for experimentation with different strategies gave us all the chance to experiment with various suggestions put forward by myself or participants, to see what new approaches (or re-visited old approaches) might work, in a low-pressure, supportive environment.

Language issues made some aspects of learning more difficult. At times I believed myself to have been understood, only realising at final interview stage that something had got lost in translation. This could be addressed by a workbook or, time and cost permitting, an online platform, in future programmes.

An aspect of the project that I am still considering is that the goals I had in mind for it were not all shared by. In designing a creative product like this for market, there is a decision to be made between designing and creating what one will enjoy producing, aiming to attract clients who are a match for the product, and designing and creating what the market demands, sacrificing some personal interests and goals. That, of course, is a familiar dilemma to many professional musicians and other artists, and is something that should be revisited regularly to ensure financial and creative needs are met.

4.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis of the transcribed interview data was carried out to map responses to the PERMA model of well-being outlined above. I identified additional themes which I could not satisfactorily map to the five elements of the PERMA model. I have summarised the findings for each of the music and wellbeing research questions below, including excerpts of participant voices from their interview responses. There is, of course, overlap between the themes,

especially in terms of meaning, given that the enjoyment of any of the other four elements can be meaningful, depending on a participant's values or goals. I have also, due to semantic differences which I will outline in this section, used capitalised Engagement to differentiate Seligman's definition as given in the PERMA model from other uses of the word.

4.1.1 How can musical learning boost well-being?

Themes and codes are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. How can musical learning boost well-being?

Theme	Codes
Positive emotion	(Enjoyable) novelty, fun, humour, (great) interest, love of the instrument, enjoyment, joyfulness, competence, confidence, meditateness
Engagement	Flow
Positive relationships	Enjoyment of intragroup relationships, strengthening of pre-existing intragroup relationship (for married couple), strengthening of other relationships
Meaning	Identity (musical), identity (Finnish cultural), identity (home country cultural), identity (risk-taker), identity (person with agency), self-care
Accomplishment	Eureka moments, ability to play, ability to express oneself musically, ability to perform publicly, ability to self-regulate through music, ability to transfer knowledge from one domain to another
Mindful engagement	Absorption in task with (potentially expansive) awareness of present moment
Pleasurable engagement	Absorption in task with awareness of pleasure in performing it
Relief from negative emotions and experience	Relief from stress, relief from fear/anxiety, escapism, letting go of shame
Contrast to earlier music learning experience	Less stressful than earlier music learning experiences, more social than earlier music learning experiences
Desire to deepen musical learning	Plans to: continue playing kantele, learn new instrument (including voice), learn more musical theory, return to playing instrument from earlier years
Knowledge transfer to other domains	Returning to other artistic practice, trying new artistic practice, applying new knowledge to professional context

Positive Emotion

Taking positive emotions to mean those expressed with positive valence, to lesser or greater degrees of arousal, there was a wide range of positive emotions reported in the context of musical learning. Novelty was expressed as a positive, with accompanying interest in the instrument and the music, heightened by its Finnish character and the time-bound opportunity to play it, for immigrants who would be leaving Finland. For a participant who had experience of playing piano in childhood, the switch to a stringed instrument with was particularly enjoyable, and was bound up with a sense of connection to Finland,

First thing coming to my mind is that I really like that it was stringed instrument, so, really different from the way I play the piano. And the sound...the sound to me is so Finnish, and I don't know, Finland has so many, I have so many nice memories with Finland so I was really happy that I could learn this instrument that is so Finnish! [laughs] And yeah. The sound of both the stringed instrument and this typical Finnish sound...that I found really nice about the kantele. (International student)

Love of the kantele was expressed by several participants, especially those who had a turn playing the piccolo kantele, or wanted to buy one, using words like “cute”, “adorable”, and even “If I will have a possibility, I will try this tiny little thing, I'm really in love!” This aspect was both amusing and familiar to me, as I have felt similar affection for musical instruments for the pleasure I get from playing them. In the case of the “tiny” kantele, it could also, or instead, have been due to its size. Joshua Paul Dale, co-editor of *The Aesthetics and Affects of Cuteness*, addresses the perception of cuteness of small, inanimate objects, “When you're looking at [things] and seeing them as cute because they're small, you're also seeing them as cute because they're cleverly made” (as reported by Smith, 2018), referring to the original English meaning of “cute” as being “clever” or even “cunning” (a usage which is still common in Hiberno-English today.) There are possible interesting implications here for instrument selection for future projects, beyond portability and affordability, in terms of motivation to play the instrument. It would be interesting to find out if the ukulele, for example, tends to elicit similar responses in players.

Participants enjoyed the humour of playing such a novel instrument as a hobby, describing reactions they got, or imagining reactions they would get, when they revealed they played kantele. One particularly enjoyed surprising Finnish friends with that fact.

Other positive emotions reported included competence and confidence. When I asked a participant who had helped a fellow participant catch-up after missed sessions if moving into a teacher role gave her a confidence boost, she said she did not see it like that, that maybe she felt more competent in her ability to play, but that it was more that she enjoyed the sharing or bonding feeling of helping someone out. This was another example of different hierarchies of values at play in my perception of the project versus participants', with me focused on learning and her focused on pro-social aspects, in that particular instance. She did report feelings of competence and confidence more generally from the kantele learning, and shared a snapshot of that in an interaction with her musician brother, in response to my asking how well the instrument was holding its tuning when she had brought it back to her home country,

The tuning goes out of whack pretty often, but, ah, that was kind of cool because I was showing my brother, uh, I was trying to tune it and he was like, "Okay, well let me try", and then he went to tune it and he was like, "Actually, I think you did a better job than me!" and I was like "Cool". [both laugh]

Other positive emotions reported included enjoyment and joyfulness in respect of producing music both for its own ends and as a group activity. One participant described her experience of playing kantele thus: "It was so joyful! And it really helped to forget everything else. So that helped to concentrate on the moment, and, ah, just feel the happiness, because music has so strong impact for me" (Finnish participant in full-time employment).

Engagement

Whilst the previous participant report described "forgetting everything else" whilst playing kantele, her "joyful" experience of concentrating on the moment would not qualify as Engagement under Seligman's definition. As discussed in the literature review, Engagement in the PERMA model refers to a flow state in which one's absorption in a challenging but achievable task results in a loss of self-consciousness and of awareness of thought and feeling, thus being eudaimonic and subjectively experienced in the past. As expected, I could see this happen during group sessions, as participants would move into and out of the flow state, with attitudes of concentration rather than, for example, enjoyment or frustration.

However, I am not happy with the idea of classifying this particular participant's experience as merely an experience of a positive emotion; I feel it deserves to be classified under engagement, to recognise her effortful input. So, I have added a theme of "pleasurable engagement", which

I define as a hedonic experience of manageable challenge in the present. As with Seligman's Engagement and Csikszentmihalyi's flow, she was absorbed in a challenging task. It could also have been considered that she was absorbed in pursuit of a "clear goal", but in her case, that goal was enjoyment, which she was achieving in the pursuing of it. Perhaps the "pursuit" is the divisive word; she described enjoying the playing and the effort of playing and if I were to apply latent analysis, I would suggest she was not imagining herself "pursuing" anything. It is notable, I think, that this participant was Finnish, and the mismatch of these two types of engagement could reflect cultural differences between Finnish and American value systems. I added a theme of "pleasurable engagement" to distinguish the two.

Mindfulness is a similar but distinct phenomenon to flow, being focused on the present and allowing for awareness of thought and feeling, albeit through a lens of non-judgement. Whilst mindful engagement could give rise to a loss of self-consciousness through deliberate focus on an external object, it does not necessarily do so. In other words, if flow narrows the focus of awareness to the task at hand, mindfulness *can* have a narrow focus on a task *or* it can widen awareness to encompass the task, the self performing the task, and even the environment. I have, therefore, added "mindful engagement" as a separate theme, exemplified by this participant report of her intentional approach to our public performance:

Well, performance in public for me was always a big deal and I'm a little bit scared of it, but well actually...When we were playing the kantele and I tried to do it mindfully, so just concentrated on the melody and nothing else, so like the other world was, like, vanishing and there was just, like, music, me and my group and kantele and I was trying to be in harmony with this environment, and playing it, so yeah, this helped.

Another participant considered the kantele playing the best part of the project, due to the meditative quality of the practice:

It was the best part I can say. Because I can ... it is also a kind of meditation I feel, because you concentrate on those things and the tunes, everything, and it's a really good thing. I liked that very much.

One participant whose experience did seem a candidate for Seligman's Engagement was the husband of the married participant pair. His humorous account of his perception of our final performance was live translated for me by his wife, in the following conversation:

[Me] How did he find the public performance? [Wife] So, a little bit nervous and excited! [both laugh]
 [Me] Did he enjoy it once he got started? [Wife] He had no time to think about enjoying it! [all laugh]
 Just to focus on, like, finishing. [Me] Okay, so once it was finished and everyone was clapping, how did

he feel? [Wife] I think it's, like, overwhelmed by the nerves and can't remember the clapping! [Me] Just a pure adrenaline rush? [laughs] Like being in an accident? [Wife] Yeah, it's just like time flying and only the focused memory is the nerves and excitement.

He also said the public performance would be the thing he remembered most, and that it was a happy memory. (Indeed, I remember him smiling after the performance, and that was captured in event photographs.)

Positive Relationships

Staying with the husband-and-wife pair, when I asked the wife how it was for her having to be in translator mode as well as learner mode, she described a give and take, with him helping her with kantele skills as he developed them,

Really it's a little bit distracting for me if I do a translation and I just feel, like, to form some ideas in my mind and put that simply for him...it can be a distraction...But also, on the other side, he pick up to playing, so he also tutored me a lot.

Another participant's husband was a performing guitarist who was keen for her to develop the untapped musical potential he perceived in her. Having enjoyed the group learning experience, she was excited now about the prospect of learning bass guitar and playing with him and a friend of theirs:

Yeah, I'm still considering learning bass guitar and I will try...actually we tried to make a kind of band. It's not a real band – like, [husband] likes to play guitar, now I have a bass guitar so I can learn it, and we also have another guy who's playing drums, and I can sing, so we were thinking to just, you know, for ourselves, not for gigs or something, just do some rehearsals, do some covers.

At five-year follow-up, she told me she went on to learn to play the ukulele, recording covers for their new daughter and sharing them online, although she has had to stop playing for now due to a “crazy schedule” and the need to prioritise her thesis and sleep. She plans to come back to her music practice after she completes the thesis this spring.

The participant who had bonded with the piccolo kantele had described such well-being benefit from playing it every night that I gifted her the kantele I had bought second-hand, in hope that she would continue to get the same enjoyment from playing back home. I found it deeply gratifying, therefore, to hear at post-project interview that she had been playing music with her brother, describing the impact of sharing her newly developed skill with him on her family:

It was fun, ahm, and it, really, it was nice because it, I think it also, it went beyond just me and my brother or just me and...practising the kantele, but, my brother picked it up and tried to play it, and then my brother playing the guitar, he was showing my dad some things on his guitar and then my dad went out and bought a guitar for himself...I was like, okay, music all around!

She also responded to recent follow-up contact, telling me that she continued to play the kantele on and off for two years after the project, until a string broke (for which I recommended mandolin strings, if kantele strings were hard to find locally).

Another participant, who had formal musical training as a young child, told me that for her, there was more interest in meeting new people than learning new music (although she did find the kantele “very, very interesting”). Sharing a house with strangers and awaiting the arrival of her husband at Christmas, she talked about the comfort of being in the group, despite the fact that there was no socialising outside of the group sessions and the two concerts attended:

It was like, in December, the, all the sessions were very good because I could have some, uh, social relations. Even though I didn't, I didn't make like real friends or meeting like...outside of the session...I never met them as my friends, but I feel, umm, very comfortable, and I really enjoy the feeling that I'm in the group.

This observation could also be categorised under “meaning”, in the PERMA framework.

This aspect of developing positive regard for classmates but not having enough time to socialise with them was raised by one participant in a coaching session, with her saying there were a few people she could see there being friendships with, and she would have liked more time for that. I had also been thinking that I could perhaps have used more small-group work, and I asked participants for their thoughts on this during interviews. I had mixed responses, with some agreeing they would have liked a little more time and some thinking the balance of activities was fine, reflecting differing hierarchies of values or goals.

One participant reflected on how much she had enjoyed pair work, in which she had created a composition with another participant:

I would say that was really nice, because ultimately that was a change, and then like interacting with different people and you could maybe hear them out more clearly because there was just more time for one person themselves, am, yeah... And then I just got more ideas from that, I would say, when I was composing this thing with [another participant], it was really nice for me, this different kind of interaction.

I do feel some extra small-group or pair work would have been beneficial in a few ways, including offering the learning-by-observing modality I had neglected, as discussed in the methodology. With future (in-person) versions of the project, I will build more of that into the design.

Meaning

There was a rich seam of different ideas about meaning in participant interviews. The piano-playing participant was not the only one to express meaning in terms of Finnish culture, in reference to learning kantele. A participant with a strong sense of dual identity between her native Colombian identity and adopted Finnish identity bought a kantele from a local luthier, seeing it as a tangible link between the two cultures, not just for herself but within her community back in Columbia:

Of course Finland has been my home for many years already, and I feel Finland part of my life and my identity also; wherever I go afterwards, Finland will follow me forever. I bought it because I was thinking, okay, one day I will go to Colombia and I will introduce kantele there because its a totally different instrument and sound, and the roots also. So of course it's something that now I will carry on.

This participant was one I was able to follow up with recently, to see if she was still playing kantele five years on. She is back in Colombia and is now a mother, and said she still plays it sometimes, especially to her young son. This act of bonding and sharing the Finnish part of her identity with her son is also, of course, an example of contributing to positive relationships.

An interesting viewpoint from the Finnish side came from the participant who had reported getting into an enjoyable rhythm of at-home practice. She reflected on her experience of Finnish culture of musical education, describing feelings of disempowerment or denial of the musical part of her own identity:

Yes, I think 'cause in Finland, ahm, when you, I, went to school, I was usually...how would I say that, it's... [sigh] ah, children were not...how I say it...encouraged to do, ahm, like there was these children that had some... special skills, and they were praised, and then if you didn't have any [laughs], you know, then you were kind of in the background. So it, so it's nice to know that even though you didn't have that sort of skills - or you thought you didn't because you didn't even try as a child, yeah, so... so that's, that's . . . [Me] So it's nice to think that even though you didn't have that, you can do it for yourself as an adult, is that what you're thinking? [Participant] Yeah... and I kind of like, ahm, reminding myself that I probably have more skills than I know? But I haven't really tried them [laughs] before.

Just preceding that comment, she had reflected that “the thing that I learned to play an instrument is something that I never thought I could do, so it’s given me the kind of confidence to think that it’s okay to try things, even you’re old”. This revealed both an updated self-identity and what we would call in coaching a “limiting belief” about age as regards learning. (She was only in her forties, it should be noted.) This led me to remind her about brain plasticity and to remind myself to focus on that a little more in future versions of the project.

Another participant who did not have experience of performing in public before had insisted she would not want to take part, for the first few weeks of the project. It turned out to be a positive, meaningful experience for her in the group context:

I loved the atmosphere. Just, like, a group of people, like, playing together, and it’s not really, like, especially it’s not, like, anything commercial, so yeah it’s really relaxed and you can just find fun from that...

The Finnish participant who expressed joyfulness when talking about music also stressed the central importance for her of the shared nature of the experience:

I think there was, the best thing was that we were together. It was a common experiment and feeling, so I really enjoyed that...it was really nice to have that happening. I think we would miss something if we wouldn't have that.

This same participant talked about several breakthroughs in our final interview. (In fact, she was one of a few participants who would be good candidates for a separate interpretive phenomenological analysis, if I were to re-approach the data and transcribe it in more detail than was necessary here, as a future iteration of the project.) Firstly, when I asked her how she had found learning by ear versus learning by reading notes, she answered,

Ah, first I thought that they were really complicated, both, or they were typical for me, but then I noticed that for some reason, ah, learning from notes was easier, but then I also needed to hear things in order to grab it, so... I, I think I really needed both and they were both difficult at first because I had never done anything, I’m...my ear hasn’t, I haven’t had to listen and then repeat, or, that sort of thing, so, so, umm, it took time and I was frustrated at first [laughs], very frustrated, but just, ah, I kept doing it, and then I got it, yeah.

I reminded her of a time she told me in a coaching session that she had practiced for three hours one evening and then she “got it” (which she had illustrated by punching the air). She elaborated,

That was the time when I really, really grabbed the thing, how to read the notes and then I had to use both - I had to listen and then I had to watch the notes and then I had to listen and watch and listen and watch, and then I got it.

Other participants described eureka moments too. The participant already quoted as being surprised to discover she could understand the notes added that it was “fantastic” for her, describing it as “like when you learn some language and then you realise that you already understand what people are talking about and it’s like clicks in your mind”.

The participant whose brother took an interest in the kantele was also surprised at discovering she could hear how to play by ear. She continued to enjoy these eureka moments beyond the project:

I was surprised that I could hear, ahm, eventually, how to play a tune. Like my brother taught me Jingle Bells, he just played it by ear [on the kantele] and then he taught me by ear, ‘cause we wouldn’t have any notes...I got so excited I was like I’m playing Jingle Bells! [both laugh]

The participant who expressed joy in playing also talked of the joy of learning with ease, the fact that she was “quite easily” learning something new. She also commented that “you can’t be proud because maybe in Finland it’s one of not so good things that you can’t be openly so, happy about your, what you have done good”.

Another participant increased her practice (which had not, until then, been a priority given university workload) ahead of the public performance. She reported a small sense of accomplishment,

I think, ah, a few days before our public performance, I did more practice than before. So after that I can play like four sessions over and over again, like three or even four times without making any mistakes. So in that case I think, okay, I’m not really...with just a zero now for music in my brain...I can learn some music at least in that sense.

Relief from negative emotions and experience

Whilst the PERMA model focuses on positive emotions, I feel that only tells half the story, if what is being experienced is a shift from negative to positive, or relief from a negative emotion. This was a theme that came up with a few participants in discussing the impact of kantele playing on their wellbeing. For example, a participant with whom I discussed strategies for reducing university stress and family-related stress, remarked “sometimes you need to find

some...perhaps some way to get away from the real life. So that's really a way to just immerse yourself inside".

The participant who approached the public performance with an attitude of mindful engagement also talked about a reduction in self-doubt or fear through learning to play kantele:

It gives some nice experience to me and now I'm more trustful to myself, I mean I know that at least I could read notes, for me it's fantastic! For me previously it was Chinese! I didn't get a thing out of it, and it was just lines on the paper, but yeah, after these lessons at least I now know what is that about, it is not that scary to go through it and try it anyway, so it's great.

We talked a lot in coaching conversations about transfer of knowledge between different domains, and she reflected that by applying what she learned from kantele playing to the work domain, she was able to overcome "stupid feeling of being ashamed by my work":

Now I can think, umm, okay, people do mistakes, and there is nothing bad, and nobody will kill me, and, you know, even tho' previously I even know these things, but now because I can do this, this "step back and take a breath" [laughs]. It helps to not only know that but feel it and realise it.

In addition to the participant already quoted, a second reported finding the music classes a respite from cold and dark Finnish November nights and an onerous workload:

This November month was quite exhausting for me, so much uni stuff to do, and .. I remember this one day that I went to the class, like your Tuesday evening class, and I had been in uni the whole day, and it was so exhausting and I had slept maybe just 3 hours the night before and I was really tired, but it was still...like, when I was going from uni to class it didn't feel like Oh, I still need to go to another class before I can finally go to bed, it felt like, Okay, now I'm going to do more relaxing stuff on the way home (it was in Musica that time anyway, so). But yeah! It made me feel ...it was very nice experience of making music, these times, this time.

Contrast to earlier music learning experience

Two participants from different cultural backgrounds who had received formal musical education in childhood talked about the contrast between that often negative or stressful experience and the easeful enjoyment of this one. One learner said,

It wasn't like my piano lessons back then, because back then I was pushed both from maybe my parents and my teacher to practice, practice, practice. And even if I didn't feel like, if I maybe, like, bad time of the day or something. Yeah, this way I was really...maybe because I didn't need to have some specific thing achieved at some point, so, yeah, that just felt really good. So I could just play and enjoy it while I play, and yeah, don't think so much about the...yeah, there was not this pressure so much; that was really good.

The other participant had similar thoughts. Speaking about the kantele learning, she said,

I really enjoy and, um, actually I'm not a kind of person who really enjoy the music, even though I can play, like, some instruments, something like the piano or... I think I have quite good sense of music! But I'm not that into music. But the kantele was something new, and it was very, very interesting in the first time, and also it was very good to have the people around me.

I also enquired about previous experience of learning by ear. Her piano classes took place over 25 years previously (making her under six years old at the time), and she did not think she had been given the chance to learn by ear. When I asked if she liked learning by ear in our project, she said yes, but also imagined the perspective of classmates who were new to musical learning:

Yes, because, ah, you didn't push us to learn the kantele [laugh] so it was very, like, comfortable environment, and it was very easy for me, and so I feel absolutely comfort with that. And I think, so, it was very good, like, approach for someone who'd never played an instrument, because we had some members who had never, you know, learned some kind of instrument. So I think it was very good approach.

When asked if she preferred learning by ear or by notation, she said she "just felt more comfortable learning by ear", and that she didn't like written music so much. I reflected at this point that another participant had said similar things about the lack of pressure in this learning environment being hugely different from childhood. She reflected,

sometimes you become to be hate about the music because of your childhood experience, and I think I have some of that kind of bad experience too because, like, it's very strict to...what I learn in piano, the instructor was...quite strict about playing piano, so I had to push myself quite hard.

Whilst it is sad to think of a child or young person being put off music so badly, it is encouraging to think that as an adult, the damage can be undone.

Desire to deepen musical learning

On whether she was thinking of switching instruments (she did not plan to continue with kantele due to not having an instrument), she said she might go back to piano, or learn a more popular or conventional stringed instrument like a guitar, adding that she thought she would try that some day but had no specific time for it in the near future.

The other participant who had played piano in childhood related that she had returned to her family home over Christmas and been inspired to play piano again:

It's actually nice that I came home after, like, after the project now, because here's the piano, and I was actually playing comparatively much. So I'm really happy with that, because... it just feels really good to do this different kind of stuff, and yeah, like I said in the beginning, I just wanted to give music a bit more room in my life, and, or like making music a bit more room in my life, and so far, at least, it's working!

She had even sought out her old notes on harmony theory, and she planned to start renting the piano room in her student accommodation complex on her return to Jyväskylä, wondering why she had not thought of it before.

The Finnish participant who had updated her identity as a musical learner was planning to borrow a kantele from a colleague and said she would probably learn more theory if she did continue. She was also now interested in learning another traditional Finnish instrument, the lyre, and she planned to continue improvising on her drum.

Her compatriot also hoped to keep playing kantele, but since "Father Christmas didn't bring me one", she had gone back to playing guitar in the meantime, playing it "so much more". She had also enquired about a place on a JYU music therapy group, as she was finding the music-making so powerful for managing stress. I was able to follow-up with her recently and learned that she did buy a kantele and plays it, but not so often. She still plays guitar (and has been singing all her life).

The couple from Asia were both open to continuing with kantele, if they could find an inexpensive one, or learning new instruments in future, with the husband considering a more complex, native version of the harp, and the wife considering guitar. However, they had no concrete plans for learning, with the wife talking about the importance of context and environment,

I'm not sure I still have the passion about learning something else back home, because that will be a lot different living environment and the attitude will be totally, like, different, so I'm not sure about that part, but I think at least perhaps I will just keep with the habit of listening to music.

Since the project ended, she had been borrowing a dozen CDs at a time from the local library, favouring Latin American guitar music, which was the reason she thought the guitar might be an instrument she would like to learn some day.

Knowledge transfer to other domains

Aside from a desire to deepen musical learning, multiple participants talked about returning to other artistic hobbies they had neglected, including poetry, photography and other art making. One began a daily writing habit, after we worked on task scheduling and habit formation in one-to-one coaching:

I made a rota, I said, *ok, this thing I always avoid and I should do this...every day I should write*, because I used to write poems or something but I left for more than one year or something; somewhere I lost the track. Then I'm pushing myself every day, okay I should write something, two lines maybe, but I should write. Then after writing, it gives a really good feeling. So this is one thing that I'm pushing myself to do . . . "Mostly I'm keeping to night time, and if night, if somehow it doesn't happen, morning I'm getting up and I sit and get writing."

Another participant, having previously lost confidence and thinking "why bother?" if her creative practice was not going to be a career path, described returning confidence in her creativity as a knock-on effect from the music learning:

I think it gave me a little boost of confidence, not only learning something new but also in the...around the creativity in general, ahm, it's an artform and so it was nice to kind of get back into feeling creative 'cause I've been without of that for a really long time...Even this morning I was drawing a little sign that said "be kind", ahm, I was like I think I still got this! I still got a little bit of, uh, art and a little bit of fire in there, you know?

On the professional front, a participant who was nervous about the public performance was also nervous about public speaking in her professional role. Reflecting on what she had learned from the performance, she said,

Well, okay, I think the first thing...that I had in mind is I should practice more [laughs] before the performance. [laughs] The nerves just, like, make your fingers just tied together, it...you just forgot to use them correctly.

I asked what she had thought when she had seen the audience smiling, and she said "I think for the second session I looked more at audience. Yeah, I think their face shows they are interested in that". We discussed how the same strategies could be used for public speaking, which she found daunting and stressful; the need for preparation, acting confident, and finding smiling faces in the audience.

The participant who approached the performance with mindful engagement talked about carrying the same approach over to her professional work, letting go of anxiety and shame about making mistakes:

I feel it helped and now I actually will try to use it for very important things in my life, like, for example, conferences or, well, on this Friday I will have a presentation at the group meeting, not that big a deal but still, it's a little public thing even for eight people and talking about my projects now I hope will be way more easier and I won't be that... I'm usually having this stupid feeling of being ashamed for my work, like I did something wrong, or, and now I can think, umm okay, people do mistakes, and there is nothing bad, and nobody will kill me, and, you know, even though previously I even know these things, but now because I can do this, this "step back and take a breath" [laughs], it helps to not only know that but feel it and realise it.

I asked her if she felt the project had worked holistically in terms of giving her skill transference, she said she had found it a "weird combination" at first since the coaching could be about any topic, not just the music,

But then you know, step by step we started to help me to solve lots of my, not problems, but, not troubles, I don't know...[Me] Challenges maybe? [Her] Challenges, yes! So I go through that and I realise lots of stuff because of that, for example taking too much jobs is not a good idea because sometimes I'm over-excited about lots of projects, and this really helped me, you know, concentrate, and this is very important. And even if you would think that music wouldn't help in that, well, kantele really helped to understand what is the time about, and that okay, I can just spend one or two hours per week playing kantele, and I will learn! Step by step. So even like, couple of hours per week for some business or something, is very, very useful and can lead you to some nice progress.

This was a clear example of development of agency and the ability to apply learning from one domain to another.

4.1.2 How can mindfulness boost well-being?

Themes and codes are displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 2. How can mindfulness boost well-being?

Theme	Codes
Positive emotion	Calm, good feeling, restfulness
Engagement	Not mentioned
Positive relationships	Bonding through making the other the focus of a meditation
Meaning	Self-care
Accomplishment	Ability to self-regulate, removal of barriers to accomplishment
Relief from negative emotions and experience	Relief from: mental overwhelm, stress, exhaustion
Knowledge or transfer to other domains	Mindful approach to other instrument playing, emotional self-regulation in workplace, emotional self-regulation as new parent

Positive Emotion

Although mindfulness practice is meant to involve non-judgement, that is, the avoidance of labelling experiences or thoughts as positive or negative, participants frequently talk about it feeling good. Often, they position this in contrast to stress felt at other times, which again, I consider important to recognise as distinct from merely the presence of a positive feeling. To that end, I have again added the theme “Relief from negative emotions and experience”, to address participant comments that explicitly highlighted the contrast between the good feeling of the positive emotion and the bad feeling of the negative one.

Some participants did simply report feeling good, calm, or restful through practice. One participant, when asked how her well-being had changed because of the project, focused on both the music and the mindfulness' impact on positive emotion: “It has been changed for good

I guess, because I felt positive all the time during the project, and mostly due to the music classes and meditation”.

Engagement

Engagement was not mentioned by participants in this context, explicitly or implicitly, and perhaps does not apply here, as Seligman's engagement is about losing track of time and sense of self through deliberate effort, whilst mindfulness is about awareness of the current moment. However, it is possible that a mindful approach to an activity could turn into Engagement as Seligman defines it, given its helpfulness in overcoming anxiety or other negative feelings about a task. That is something I could explore as an explicit strategy in future iterations of the project.

Positive Relationships

Most participants did not report any impact on relationships of mindfulness. Some were separated by distance from partners, others were single, and none discussed practicing mindfulness with partners or friends. The married couple among the participants, however, took my suggestion to mindfully hold hands and turned it into a daily mindful hug, which they were enjoying as a bonding experience, and still doing when we did our post-project interview:

It's a kind of like, sometimes it's really funny, like, because we just get up in the morning time and do coffee and then suddenly remember, Okay! We missing something for today, let's hug! [laughs]

Meaning

Some participants recognised the importance of self-care. One said that what she learned about herself from the project was that “that I can be kinder not only to myself - or not only to others, but myself - and not feel guilty about it”. When I talked about how mindfulness practice can feel like a luxury, she said “definitely a luxury, like, and that's where I think the not feeling guilty about it either is important.”

One participant at five-year follow-up said it was good to be reminded of a time of self-care and that there were strategies that could be used at any time

Accomplishment

Some described an ability to self-regulate and a gain or maintain a sense of perspective due to mindfulness practice. These could be classed as accomplishments, especially where they are contrasted with states of emotionality:

Well actually it still impacts me so sometimes when I'm anxious or you know, really worried, or, I don't know, something bad happened and I'm sad, I can go for this mindfulness and like calm myself down and step out of the situation, see that this is not, like the end of the world and I can keep moving and I can make it better or I can react, whatever the situation is. And yeah, it's now easier to make some decisions, especially 'cause I'm a really emotional person, for me it's sometimes easier to, ah, maybe control it better, so it helps.

Other responses showed a sense of lack of accomplishment, which would need to be addressed. One participant discussed finding the body scan meditation easier when guided, than when trying to do it alone:

During project I really loved the meditation, especially the long session for meditation. And also, I try to do meditation - the long session - by myself alone after the session, but it doesn't really work well, because I, I'm not sure perhaps, just, like, mm, your voice, your tone, just really can comfort people and make people calm down, and as I do the meditation, like, ah, the instruction you did from the toe, and move a little bit, a little bit up, so I try to do that, most of the time it's just like, stop in the middle [laughs], I can't continue with that part.

This would be easily addressed with custom recordings or having participants find recordings or apps they enjoy.

Others talked about how they had failed to make mindfulness a habit. As is common, in my experience of leading mindfulness groups, some people perceived themselves as too busy or distracted to be able to incorporate mindfulness.

Ahm, actually, I didn't practice the mindfulness, the practice so much, because I specifically forgot sometimes or I didn't have much time. I know, like, mindfulness doesn't require much time or as much space, but ah for me to remind the mindfulness is very, uh, difficult, because...I think it was because I was in the foreign country and I was quite busy to start all the things in the first semester, to adjust myself to Finland. So... [laughs]

Some expressed some element of guilt or embarrassment at not having done what was considered "homework", that is, at failing to accomplish the new skill or habit. I feel they would be helped by some kind of habit-tracking app or materials.

Relief from negative emotions and experiences

One participant talked about a temporary shift from a negative to a positive mindset with mindfulness practice, at our end-of-project interview:

Even tho' I didn't do it very often, whenever I do it, I feel like, ahm, yeah, I become more positive. As you know, I am quite negative kind of person, so I always see something very negatively, and I always imagine some, like, the, the worst situation...I still have negative sense of being [laughs], of seeing something but when I practice the mindfulness, at that moment I feel like being more positive at the moment.

She agreed that regular practice might help shift her mindset from a negative one to a more positive one, but she did not believe she could successfully make a habit of it without someone pushing her to do it. Some kind of accountability or tracking process might help someone with a similar mindset in future versions of the project. I recommended some apps for her to try.

Another participant talked of mindfulness as a way to clear her head on busy days, noting that she could not be sure how much of an overall effect it had, with no control condition:

It really helped me to, mm, in some parts of the day, if the day was really taskful, and I had a lot on my mind, to get a clear head, so yeah that was also good. I couldn't tell how much it made me feel better in total because I don't really know how much worse I would've felt if I hadn't done it. But yeah, at least this tiny result that I saw immediately afterwards felt better than yeah, of course, also something.

The participant who described the benefits of self-regulation afforded by mindfulness practice at work also told me at recent follow-up that she had successfully used it during new motherhood and difficult times:

Meditation helped me a lot during my first maternity leave, when I was on the border of mind exhaust. After hours and hours of my baby girl crying the only thing that helped me stay together was meditation. Of course there was also a lot of support from my husband and a friend who had the same age baby, but meditation was a very useful tool to control my feelings. As for now, I'm not really using meditation, but I think I will come back to it within two months to start my mind training before the second baby is born.

She again referred to emotional self-regulation as a lasting impact of the project:

To me the lasting impact was my ability to step out of the situation, breathe a bit, and come back to it to look on it less emotional. That helped me a lot during the conflict situation and during some hard times.

4.1.3 How can the practice of gratitude boost well-being?

Themes and codes are displayed in Table 3.

TABLE 3. How can the practice of gratitude boost well-being?

Theme	Codes
Positive Emotion	Gratitude, positivity, specialness
Engagement	Not mentioned
Positive Relationships	Appreciation of other
Meaning	Perspective, planning for future
Accomplishment	Not mentioned

Positive Emotion

Most of the participants reported feeling gratitude and positivity with this exercise. One participant, who was managing to spend time almost every night before sleep thinking about why the day was “really good” for her (a positive framing), said it was making the day more special for her.

One participant found it easier than the mindfulness,

because it’s just clear that you have three different things to, to say, and it can be like small things, so it doesn’t need to be big things, so I feel very comfortable with this, and after I do this I feel like, yes, I became more positive.

However, one participant did not gain any benefit from the practice,

I don’t know if it’s so much my thing, because, mm, I was thinking...because it’s not really working for me, I was thinking *why*, because it’s really logical that it should work, but even tho’ I tell myself *oh this went well today*, it’s - while I’m telling myself like, *yes, I know, so what, what about it?* [laughs] I don’t know, I don’t really get the boost from that, I don’t know why.

I wondered was it perhaps that she was already focused on the positive so it did not do anything for her, and she said “Yeah, could be”. She also mentioned expecting a benefit from it and being

disappointed, so I will have to be careful to set expectations in future. My own experience is the same as hers as I generally feel appreciative in. I also tried posting the three things on social media during our project as a way to illustrate what we were doing in the group, but I quickly felt guilty, because even though I was thanking particular people in the post, the constant stream of gratitude looked very privileged. I stopped after a few days.

Engagement

Analysis did not turn up any reference to engagement in terms of gratitude. In hindsight, this could perhaps be a strategy for increasing engagement in a task, i.e., expressing gratitude about the opportunity to carry out the task, or for what it will result in.

Positive Relationships

The married couple of the three had found guidance about the gratitude exercise confusing, thinking they had to find three significant things to be grateful for each day, specifically things that each had done for each other. This came to light in the post-project interview with the wife, when she said,

I did try to do like daily appreciation things, but I found it's not easy because we really can not get used to saying directly like thank-you for doing this or that, in certain time, and...face to face, it's a little like unnatural for us. Because for us, like, especially I'm only talking about relationship between both of us - so we appreciate each others, like, we do not say it, but we do it...so normally I just like to support or to like kind of do some other things for him as well. I took that as a kind of gratefulness. It's not really like I put it by the verbal, I just, uh, did it by action.

Clearly, there was gratitude being expressed between them (she provided me with specific examples), so this was a communication failure due to the language issues, and could have been prevented with short written instruction. When I clarified how gratitude could be expressed for very simple and basic things, she said "I think perhaps I just give a try for that. It's a good way to force yourself to think and, like, stay positive. It's a kind of like an instant exercise". As this conversation took place at the end of the project, I do not know whether she tried that and what the outcome was. Again, similar errors could be prevented with a simple app (which could be in participants' own language) or some kind of written material.

Meaning

Some participants talked about using the gratitude exercise to keep perspective. The one who found nightly practice helped her feel the day was special added,

it really helps me, at least, to summarise somehow what is happening in my life and to see that I am moving somewhere, so that it's not, you know, just sitting and living my life through, but I'm thinking what I want to do and what goals do I have, so I feel that I have some aim in the end and i'm doing something useful.

She told me at five-year follow-up that she now does that monthly, as it helps her to summarise good things over the month. Another participant was also continuing to use it at a much-reduced rate, telling me at follow-up that she now uses it three or four times a year “just as a quick grounding and perspective exercise”.

Accomplishment

Analysis did not turn up any reference to accomplishment in terms of gratitude practice. Participants who had successfully formed a habit of it may have felt a sense of accomplishment for having done so.

4.1.4 How can coaching boost well-being?

Themes and codes are displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4. How can mindfulness boost well-being?

Theme	Codes
Positive emotion	Positivity, enjoyment, kindred spirit, self-revelation, inspiration
Engagement	Not mentioned
Positive relationships	Not mentioned
Meaning	Self-care, meaningful work
Accomplishment	Goal attainment, slow and steady progress
Organisation	Organisation toolkit, manageability, goal-setting, adjustment to life abroad
Agency	Agency toolkit, self-appraisal, taking responsibility, updating identity, mindset shift, moving forward

Positive emotion

Some participants talked about positivity coming from the coaching session. Some comments highlighted how the coaching alliance can work well when the coachee perceives similarity between them and the coach (and vice versa), which I coded as “kindred spirit”. For example, one participant felt understood when talking about how wonderful and exhausting it is to be interested in many different things, because we are similar in that way: “It’s so much fun to speak to someone who is really like me! So I was really enjoying it!” Others enjoyed the opportunity to be heard: “I could say something about myself, it was, like, yeah, great experience really, yeah. I usually don’t open up my mind so easily to somebody”.

Engagement

Engagement was not talked about in terms of impact of coaching; coaching is very much about self-awareness, not loss of self. Group coaching was, of course, meant to help people get into

the flow state in the music sessions, which I observed at times. But participants did not report on this.

Positive Relationships

One participant worked on issues around their primary relationship in coaching, and another with a family relationship. This was not discussed at final interview.

Meaning

Some participants used coaching sessions to work on the area of developing meaningful careers or business. For the participant who was stressed out with work, taking time for coaching was a rare instance of prioritising self-care:

Because it was from person to person, it was really nice to have time just for me. It was some kind of [me] time, and it was the moment where I had to stop and really think about these things, that I am the choices that I make, and I have the opportunity every day, every day I can choose and make things differently.

Accomplishment

Those last two mottos were “good, strong ideas” as she put them that she had come up with for how she wanted to live her life. She talked about slow and steady progress: “I’m making the changes slowly, slowly, but anyway, I’m making them every day . . . it’s a lifetime of habits being replaced with better habits”.

Organisation

For many participants, coaching sessions were used to come up with organisation strategies to help them in their study and life in general. One found mind maps particularly useful for capturing all the complexity of her new life in Finland:

Mind maps helped me a lot because it helped me to organise my things and I was quite, ah, lost in so many things to do in Finland, but like, ah, doing the mind mapping I could organise the things I needed to do in the near future and the long term.

The same participant liked the accountability aspect of coaching:

The coaching sessions, the face-to face coaching sessions were very helpful for me, in the way of organising my study, and also to be more organised in general [laughs] because I was alone here, and sometimes I get you know, too lazy, but yeah, through the coaching sessions I could organise the things that I need to do.

Another found our focus on scheduling actions and goals most useful:

I need to have concrete goals, concrete days, times, keeping the deadline makes you move forward.

One said she felt better using the new organisational techniques:

What we talk about here in coaching, this, am, *how do I make the plans in my life or how do I get more structure in my life*, and I think there's, of course there's still a way to go but it makes, it made me feel better to use these different techniques, or actually, really easy things to apply, and then they changes quite much, so that made me feel quite good about the making plans.

Agency

She added, “And actually, this is what I wasn't feeling so good about before this, like, I think I give up on plans so easily...I think I kind of changed my view on that a bit”, signifying a self-appraisal and an updating of sense of identity.

Participants talked about having developed the tools they needed to take charge of their well-being and their lives. Some talked about mindset shifts, one participant at the time said the coaching had helped “a lot, increased a lot my positive mindset and wellbeing, how I think and how I see things and solutions”. Five years later, she said “The project is still very important for me and my life, it really changed and impacted in a very positive way, it gave very useful skills for a positive life”.

For many participants, coaching was an opportunity for self-appraisal, leading to taking responsibility for change, resulting in increased sense of agency. My participant who joined the project due to work burn-out, reflected:

It has been some kind of...I say, stations to stop and, uh, look at myself and, ah, how my well-being is really not in that level that I like it to be . . . I am the choices that I make. So, that's one thing that's clearly in my mind now: I am the choices that I make. So I have opportunities to make a choice, so that's the one thing. Because sometimes you just don't get it, you just go by the, mm, stream, and you don't think, but every day you have, you have the possibility to make a choice. And that's something really big for me also. And that's something that came from the group and from your coaching.

One participant had a realisation about avoidance, saying that an impact of coaching was realising, “I think I am not active in putting effort as I should. Maybe I have not achieved as I want”. I asked if she also learned solutions to that, how to be more proactive, and she replied “Yes, to face what looks challenging. I keep always myself aside, but it would be better to accept the challenge and face it”. This self-appraisal thus led to a determination to take more responsibility and increase agency.

That participant added, “sometimes we’re maybe thinking the same way but we never get the clear picture until someone else tells us”. Often, I can see progress in a client that they cannot yet see themselves. For instance, the participant who had a strong sense of identity as a “negative person” was beginning to become more positive. It was not a dramatic change, but it was moving in the direction she wanted to. In the final interview, I pointed out the importance of noticing changes and changing your story, saying I knew her as a person who was becoming more and more positive. This is another place where a tracking or diary element to the project would have helped. The questionnaire scores were not really useful as so many other factors could affect scores, such as end of year exams, reunions with partners, house moves; participants were often surprised at what they had scored and unsure about why they had scored them that way

A participant told me she enjoyed coaching because of the accountability and sounding board opportunity it gave her.

Another recognised us both being women of the same age, and found it helpful to compare my situation to hers:

I’m thinking about, like, we’re a similar age and we’re both female but we have totally different life situation and lifestyle. So sometimes I’m thinking, like, your life and your experience can give me some inspiration about what I do in the future. Yeah because that’s what I thought a lot recently, because 2016 is the year I need to go back and face the life . . . So should I just fall back into the old habit and the lifestyle before or should I just like to do something please myself? I’m still like in the swing and I was thinking... but yeah, your personal story can just give me a good example of that.

Meanwhile, a participant who had been stressed about how well she was doing in the musical class compared to peers took to heart a message *not* to compare herself to others, saying she remembered me telling them there was no competition or grades, and everyone had their own speed.

4.1.5 How can mindfulness practice deepen the impact of learning experiences?

Consistent with my prior experience, mindfulness appeared to mediate barriers to learning, by encouraging non-judgement observance of thoughts and feelings, preventing overwhelm by anxiety or self-criticism.

4.1.6 How can the practice of gratitude deepen the impact of learning experiences?

Practicing gratitude was reported by some participants to have a positive and lasting effect on their mood. This may have amplified the positive effects of learning, although it cannot be judged to what extent in the absence of a control group. For other participants, it did not add anything to their experience.

4.1.7 How can coaching deepen the impact of learning experiences?

Coaching that is focused on encouraging participants to appraise new skills and knowledge and consider how to use these in other domains can greatly extend the impact of learning experiences, in both personal and professional life. This was borne out by participants' ideas and actions about returning to artistic practice, taking up new artistic practice, and applying skills in a professional context.

4.1.8 How useful is the PERMA model of well-being when applied to learning interventions, particularly musical learning?

Having attempted a mapping exercise of my thematic analysis to the PERMA model, I consider it moderately useful, but not sufficiently so, according to my analysis of various phenomena at play. For future projects I would be interested in exploring alternative models or even attempting to conceptualise my own.

4.1.9 How can I become more effective in my work in the above areas, whilst honouring my values?

The use of some kind of printed reference materials and tracking methods that can help participants track progress without adding an administrative burden would greatly help participants get the most out of this programme. I also developed a new appreciation for the need to negotiate values and to be alert for cultural bias. The development of this action research study was an extremely useful exercise, with much learned about the complexity and richness of such an approach. Action research principles can be applied to my reflective practice even outside of academic research, and I will need to continue thinking about how to validate my work. Areas of further study that seem of high importance are philosophy, in terms of positioning my work in a worldview from which I can better understand how best validation might be achieved, and other analysis techniques such as discourse analysis for future research ideas.

4.1.10 Can my proposed programme meaningfully affect well-being and musical engagement?

The programme can and did meaningfully affect well-being and musical engagement, in quite powerful ways, and for myself as well as my participants. I am unsure to what extent it meaningfully impacted the one participant who did not speak English, although he reported enjoying certain aspects of the project, but for everyone else, effects were tangible, significant, and, in cases where I was able to follow up, long-lasting. For example, the participant who got such joy from the project says that has only increased since:

I got a seed for meditation and gratitude exercises and now after many processes in my life I use them regularly. I enjoyed very much the project and the joy it gave to me has been growing ever since. Music is a big part of my life and well-being.

The participant who played kantele for another two years before a string broke, has also continued with mindfulness and gratitude exercises:

I still use mindfulness techniques (mostly silent meditation and breathing exercises). I use gratitude exercise maybe three or four times a year just as a quick grounding and perspective exercise.

She reflected on the project, acknowledging that in doing so, she was reminding herself she can prioritise self-care again now:

I have fond memories of the project. Overall very glad I was able to participate when I look back on it. I think it was useful for the time I had participated and helpful in the present sense to think back on a time of self-care and knowing it's possible to implement these same or similar activities at any time.

Improvements

People who reported positive but temporary or small changes tended not to have been maintaining habits of music practice, gratitude and mindfulness at home. In future versions of the project, I will include some methods of tracking habit for participants to choose from.

5 DISCUSSION

My findings mirrored positive impacts of music on well-being outlined in the literature, with additional dimensions relating to how well-being benefits from musical learning can be applied to other domains of functioning and how well-being strategies can remove some identified barriers to music learning. This may be useful to others researching complex interactions between music and well-being, or designing programmes of that nature.

In judging the success of this project, it is necessary to revisit my original objectives, beginning with those relating to participant learning and outcomes:

- to foster in participants and observers a recognition of innate human musicality, as opposed to musicality being a rare “gift” in certain individuals,
- to foster in participants and observers a recognition of their continued ability to learn and be creative as adults (countering notion of being “too old” to learn new skills),
- to demonstrate to participants and observers how particular strategies and engagement in learning projects can support learning and build confidence and self-esteem,
- to inspire participants and observers to consider other goals previously thought to be out of reach, with an increased sense of learning ability and confidence, and
- to provide participants with an opportunity to create and achieve musical goals in a supportive environment, with a team comprising a coach/tutor and peers, experimenting with multiple techniques to boost performance and well-being

Participant feedback showed that the project was successful in meeting my objectives for them, and also their goals for themselves, as described in the previous section. Ways in which the project could be more successful in future iterations have also been identified.

Several objectives of this research will be realised by this write-up and any future articles produced from it (academic or otherwise), highlighting the positive outcomes experienced by participants and the unique Finnish culture in which they took place:

- to add to existing research on music and well-being,
- to further promote music-making as a powerful source of well-being in individuals, groups and societies, thus bolstering support for community arts, music education and music therapy,
- to promote the University of Jyväskylä (JYU) music psychology programme, music department, facilities and research, and
- to pay respect to the people and culture of Finland, in gratitude for the academic opportunity they provided me.

I judge the following objectives to have been met satisfactorily for me for this iteration of the project:

- to validate my professional practice and develop important research skills necessary for ethical integrity, and
- to validate this music and well-being programme for future roll-out

Whilst I have a high degree of confidence in the merit of the music and well-being programme with clear ideas for how to progress with that, I recognise that I am at an early stage of an ongoing, iterative process of improvement in terms of validation techniques and research skills, requiring much further learning. This is as it should be for an ethical practitioner.

And finally, this personal goal was met through engagement with the wonderful people at the Gloria centre, in my participant group, and in the JYU faculty and student body, leaving me with many meaningful memories of my time in Jyväskylä:

- to better integrate myself into the Jyväskylä community

6 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Participants reported various well-being outcomes from the different elements of the project and combinations thereof. They were able to deepen the impacts of new skills by applying them to other areas of life functioning. Their perspectives are important for anyone interested in the experiences of adult new music learners or music returners, including those with negative memories of childhood musical learning. Indeed, they are important for anyone interested in lifelong learning and in ways in which people can update their sense of their own abilities and agency, on an ongoing basis.

Certain constraints applied to this project, in terms of timing, language issues, cost, size, complexity, and confidentiality, being an unfunded project as part of a master's programme. The complex nature of the project and lack of a control group means no conclusions can be drawn about individual effects of any project element. Whilst it was not my goal to draw such conclusions, this limits the usefulness of this study to others. It may, however, spark ideas for research that others can test in ways more appropriate to their needs.

From this pilot, I am confident that I can create adapted versions for different groups of participants based on their needs and goals. Depending on project size and purpose (whether primarily as a commercial enterprise or for research purposes), I could collaborate with others for delivery and evaluation. Language issues could be addressed through participant selection and appropriate use of simple and clear materials and ongoing feedback checks to ensure understanding. These could be physical or digital. Gamification could be introduced as part of habit-forming materials, particularly with digital materials.

I found the project extremely meaningful and moving. It is always a real privilege to be trusted by someone enough for them to share their hopes and fears with you, and to be able to feel you have helped them believe in themselves or find a practical way forward towards meaningful goals. This project had a proximity to participants that was unusual, given that we were meeting twice weekly, once at group sessions, once in one-to-one sessions, for around eight weeks. I offered some further free coaching to all participants in thanks for their openness and trust in me, and I did go on to coach two of them through career changes and country moves. It has been wonderful to reflect on the experience in this report.

References

- Anderson M. L. (2003). Embodied cognition: a field guide. *Artificial Intelligence*, 149, 91–130
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0004-3702\(03\)00054-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0004-3702(03)00054-7)
- Blood, A. J., & Zatorre, R. J. (2001). Intensely pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in brain regions implicated in reward and emotion. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 98(20), 11818-11823.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London, UK: SAGE.
- Carlson, E. (2012). *Affect regulation, mental health disorders, and maladaptive brain responses in music listening: a correlational study*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Croom, A. (2014). *Music practice and participation for psychological well-being: A review of how music influences positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment*. *Musicae Scientiae*, published online before print.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864914561709>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). *Flow: The classic work on how to achieve happiness*. London, England: Random House. (Original work published 1923)
- Custodero, L. A. (2005). Observable indicators of flow experience: A developmental perspective on musical engagement in young children from infancy to school age. *Music Education Research*, 7(2), 185–209.
- Davidson, J. W. (2004). Music as social behavior. In E. Clarke & N. Cook (Eds.), *Empirical musicology: Aims, methods, prospects* (pp. 57–75). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Davidson, J. W. (2011). Musical participation: Expectations, experiences, and outcomes. In I. Deliège & J. W. Davidson (Eds.), *Music and the mind: Essays in honour of John Sloboda* (pp. 65–87). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Dewey, J. (1963) *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: Collier.
- Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Faulkner, R. S. C. & Davidson, J.W. (2004). Men's vocal behaviour and the construction of self. *Musicae Scientiae*, 7(2), 231-255.
- Feather, N. T. (1975). *Values in education and society*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Fiske, E. B. (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, Washington, DC.; Arts Education Partnership, Washington, DC.

- Ford, L., & Davidson, J. W. (2003). An investigation of members' roles in wind quintets. *Psychology of Music, 31*(1), 53-74.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2011). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218–226.
- Furnham, A., & Bochner, S. (1986). *Culture shock: Psychological reaction to unfamiliar environments*. London: Methuen.
- Gabrielsson, A., & Lindström Wik, S. (2003). Strong experiences related to music: A descriptive system. *Musicae Scientiae, 7*(2), 157-217.
- Garrido, S. & Schubert, E. (2011). Individual differences in the enjoyment of negative emotion in music: A literature review and experiment. *Music Perception, 28*(3), 279-295.
- Gotink, R. A., Chu, P., Busschbach, J. J. V., Benson, H., Fricchione, G. L., & Hunink, M. G. M. (2015). Standardised Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Healthcare: An Overview of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of RCTs. *PLoS ONE 10*(4): e0124344. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0124344>
- Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 57*(1), 35–43.
- Hallam, S. (1995). Professional musicians' orientations to practice: Implications for teaching. *British Journal of Music Education, 12*(1), 3-19.
- Hallam, S. (1998). The predictors of achievement and dropout in instrumental tuition. *Psychology of Music, 26*(2), 116-132.
- Hays, T. (2005). Well-being in later life through music. *Australasian Journal of Ageing, 24*, 28–32.
- Heikkinen, H. L. T., Huttunen, R., & Syrjälä, L. (2007). Action research as narrative: five principles for validation. *Educational Action Research, 15*(1), 5-19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790601150709>
- Heikkinen, H. L. T., Jong, F. P. C. M. d., & Vanderlinde, R. (2016). What is (good) practitioner research? *Vocations and Learning, 9*(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-016-9153-8>
- Ianiro, P. M., & Kauffeld, S. (2014). Take care what you bring with you: How coaches' mood and interpersonal behavior affect coaching success. *Consulting Psychology Journal, 66*, 231-257. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000012>
- Inesi, M., Botti, S., Dubois, D., Rucker, D., & Galinsky, A. (2011). Power and Choice: Their Dynamic Interplay in Quenching the Thirst for Personal Control. *Psychological Science, 22*(8), 1042-1048.
- Jackson, J. C., Watts, J., Henry, T. R., List, J.-M., Forkel, R., Mucha, P. J., ... Lindquist, K. A. (2019). Emotion semantics show both cultural variation and universal structure. *Science, 366*(6472), 1517–1522. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaw8160>
- Juslin, P. N., & Västfjäll, D. (2008). Emotional responses to music: The need to

- consider underlying mechanisms. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 31, 559-575.
- Juslin, P. N., Liljeström, S., Västfjäll, D., & Lundqvist, L-O. (2010). How does music evoke emotions? Exploring the underlying mechanisms. In P.N. Juslin & J. Sloboda (Eds.), *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, and Applications* (pp. 605-642). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Juslin, P. N. (2013). From everyday emotions to aesthetic emotions: towards a unified theory of musical emotions. *Physics of Life Reviews*, 10(3), 235–266.
- Kalmus, H. & Fry, D. B. (1980). On tune deafness (dysmelodia): frequency, development, genetics and musical background. *Annals of Human Genetics*, 43, 369–382.
- Kirschner, S. & Tomasello, M. (2010). Joint music making promotes prosocial behaviour in 4-year-old children. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 31(5), 354-364.
- Kubik, S. (2017). Music education in Finland: the recipe for excellence. Retrieved from <https://www.francemusique.fr/en/music-education-finland-recipe-excellence-15699>
- Kreutz, G., Bongard, S., Rohrman, S., Hodapp, V. & Grebe, D. (2004). Effects of choir singing or listening on secretory immunoglobulin A, cortisol, and emotional state. *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 27(6), 623-35.
- Lamont, A. (2009). Strong experiences of music in university students. In J. Louhivuori, T. Eerola, S. Saarikallio, T. Himberg, P-S Eerola (Eds.), proceedings of the 7th Triennial Conference of European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM 2009). Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Lamont, A. (2011). Emotion, engagement and meaning in strong experiences of music performance. *Psychology of Music*, 40(5), 574-594.
- Langer, E. J., & Rodin, J. (1976). The effects of choice and enhanced personal responsibility for the aged: A field experiment in an institutional setting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34(2), 191–198. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.34.2.19>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>
- Lewin, K. (1952). *Field Theory in Social Science*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Lumsden, J., Miles, L. K. & Macrae, C. N. (2014). Sync or sink? Interpersonal synchrony impacts self-esteem. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1064.
- Mills, G. E. (2014). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- McPherson, G. E. (2006), (Ed.). *The child as musician: A handbook of musical development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2010). *You and your action research project*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- McNiff, J. (2015), (Ed.) *Educational Action Research*, 23(1), 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2014.994341>

- Neff, K. D. (2009). *Self-Compassion*. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior* (pp. 561-573). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Packer, J., & Ballantyne, J. (2011). The impact of music festival attendance on young people's psychological and social well-being. *Psychology of Music*, 39, 164–181.
- Passmore, J. (Ed.). (2015). *Excellence in coaching: The industry guide*. London: Kogan Page.
- Pates, J., Karageorghis, C. I., Fryer, R., & Maynard, I. (2003). Effects of asynchronous music on flow states and shooting performance among netball players. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 4, 415-427.
- Peretz, I., & Vuvar, D. T. (2017). Prevalence of congenital amusia. *European journal of human genetics*, 25(5), 625–630. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ejhg.2017.15>
- Perkins, R. & Williamon, A. (2014). Learning to make music in older adulthood: a mixed-methods exploration of impacts on wellbeing, *Psychology of Music*, 42, 550-567 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735613483668>
- Peterson., C. & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Peterson, C., & Park, N. (2009). Classifying and measuring strengths of character. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology, 2nd edition* (pp. 25-33). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rauscher, F., Shaw, G., & Ky, C. (1993). Music and spatial task performance. *Nature* 365(6447), 611.
- Rogers, C.R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin
- Sagiv, L., & Schwartz, S. H. (2000). Values priorities and subjective well-being: Direct relations and congruity effects. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 177–198.
- Sagor, R. (2005). *The Action Research Guidebook: A Four-Step Process for Educators and School Teams*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Saarikallio, S. (2010). Music as emotional self-regulation throughout adulthood. *Psychology of Music*, 39(3), 307-327.
- Schellenberg, E. G. (2012). Cognitive performance after listening to music: a review of the Mozart effect. In MacDonald, R., Kreutz, G., & Mitchell, L. (eds.), *Music, health, and wellbeing* (pp. 324-338). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scherer, K. R. (2005). What are emotions? And how can they be measured? *Social Science Information*, 44, 695–729.
- Segall, M. H. (1979). *Cross-cultural psychology: Human behavior in global perspective*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. New York, NY: Free Press/Simon and Schuster.
- Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5).410-21.

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A new understanding of happiness and well-being - and how to achieve them*. London, England: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Sfard, Anna. (1998). On Two Metaphors for Learning and the Dangers of Choosing Just One. *Educational Researcher*, 27, 4-13. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X027002004>
- Sloboda, J. A., O'Neill, S.A., & Ivaldi, A. (2001). Functions of music in everyday life: An exploratory study using the Experience Sampling Method. *Musicae Scientiae*, 5, 9-32.
- Smith, G. (2018). Why do we think tiny things are cute? Retrieved from <https://www.popsoci.com/why-do-we-think-tiny-things-are-cute/>
- Stenhouse, L. 1975. *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann.
- Stephoe, A. (2001). Negative emotions in music making: The problem of performance anxiety. In P. N. Juslin & J. A. Sloboda (Eds.), *Music and emotion: Theory and research* (pp. 291–307). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Thorndike, E. L. (1912). *Education: A first book*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Valentine, E. & Evans, C. (2001). The effects of solo singing, choral singing and swimming on mood and physiological indices. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 74(1), pp. 115–120.
- Watanabe, E., Kuchta, K., Kimura, M., Rauwald, H.W., Kamei, T., & Imanishi, J. (2015). Effects of bergamot (*Citrus bergamia* (Risso) Wright & Arn.) essential oil aromatherapy on mood states, parasympathetic nervous system activity, and salivary cortisol levels in 41 healthy females. *Forsch Komplementmed*, 22(1), 43-9.^[1]_{SEP}
- Welzel, C., & Inglehart, R. (2010). Agency, values, and well-being: A human development model. *Social Indicators Research*, 97(1), 43–63.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>
- White, Robert. (1959). Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review*, Vol 66(5), pp. 297-333.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The English-language recruitment flyer used in this project shown in Figure 1.



Music & Wellbeing

Would you like to...

- Learn to **play Finnish kantele**?
- Learn how to **boost your wellbeing**?
- Learn how to **learn more effectively**?
- Make **new friends**?
- Make **positive changes** in your life with **individual life coaching**?

If your answer is **yes**, you are warmly invited to take part in an **8-week** active research project on music & wellbeing, **Tuesday evenings from Oct 27th at Multicultural Centre Gloria.**

Coach and musician Tracy Dempsey has over 8 years' experience of helping people improve their wellbeing and achieve their goals. She will help you learn how to play one of Finland's most traditional instruments, boosting your music skills and your confidence.
*** Participants with little/no previous musical experience preferred ***

You'll also learn how to be an effective learner, and in personal coaching sessions, you'll work with Tracy on how to apply your success to other areas of your life.

FREE!

For more information, email: tracy@soulambition.com
 Or telephone Multicultural Centre Gloria: 0400 275 163

soulambition UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO Music, Mind & Technology GLORIA

FIGURE 1 English-language project recruitment flyer

APPENDIX 2

Musical resources used in this project were as follows:

Chord chart for 5 string kantele in D-Major

Please note: To use this chart, tune your kantele to D-E-F#-G-A (from longest to shortest string)
 „Dsus2“, „Dsus4“ are sometimes also called „D2“, „D4“ etc.
 On the 5 string kantele some chords are incomplete and can therefore stand for different chords. This is indicated in this chart by the ↔ sign.

CC-Licence 3.0—Peter Widenmeyer (2014) - www.finnischekantele.de

FIGURE 2 Chord chart for 5-string kantele in D-Major

Chord chart for 5 string kantele in D-Minor

Please note: To use this chart, tune your kantele to D-E-F-G-A (from longest to shortest string)
 „Dsus2“, „Dsus4“ are sometimes also called „D2“, „D4“ etc.
 On the 5 string kantele some chords are incomplete and can therefore stand for different chords. This is indicated in this chart by the ↔ sign.

CC-Licence 3.0—Peter Widenmeyer (2014) - www.finnischekantele.de

FIGURE 3 Chord chart for 5-string kantele in D-Minor

NOTES OF THE TREBLE CLEF

Treble clef

Staff

Every Good Boy Deserves Football
E... G... B... D... F...?

E G B D F

F A C E

FIGURE 4 Notes of the treble clef handout

5-STRING KANTELE TUNED TO D

D (harmonic) minor scale

5-string kantele

D major scale

5-string kantele

FIGURE 5 D minor and major scales handout

Konivitsan Kirkonkellot

Lapinlahti

Musical notation for 'Konivitsan Kirkonkellot' in 2/4 time, D minor. The first line contains four measures with Dm chords. The second line starts at measure 5 and contains four measures with A7 chords. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Karhunpeijaispolka

Kerimäki

Musical notation for 'Karhunpeijaispolka' in 2/4 time, D major. The first line contains five measures with chords D, A7, D, G, and D. The second line starts at measure 5 and contains two measures with chords D and A7. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

FIGURE 6 Kantele folk tunes handout 1

Lullaby for Violin and Kantele [Kantele Part]

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Musical notation for 'Lullaby for Violin and Kantele [Kantele Part]' in 3/8 time, D minor. The notation is spread across five lines, each starting with a measure number (1, 5, 9, 13, 17). Chords are indicated above the notes: Dm, A7, F, Gm on the first line; Dm, A7, F, A7 on the second; Dm, Dm, A7, Dm on the third; Dm, Dm, A7, Dm on the fourth; and Dm, Dm, A7, Dm, Dm, Dm, A7, Dm on the fifth. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

FIGURE 7 Kantele folk tunes handout 2