



Art for life: LdV/PSH/SE/09/951

Didactic Unit By The Mosaic Art And Sound Ltd.

Singing and listening practices to enhance creativity at home and the workplace

General aim

The benefits of creativity to society as a whole have been vastly acknowledged in recent years and creativity techniques are desired in many environments. Employers are increasingly valuing creative skills and the ability to "think outside the box" is highly sought after.

Singing and listening practices help to unfold creative potentialities and can be performed at home, in dedicated centres and/or in the workplace.

The general aim of the *Art for Life* Singing and Listening practices is to free the voice and explore music and sound improvisation within a group of adult learners.

As the singing and listening group dynamics evolve, participants experience a sense of self-confidence in their own ability to create.

Their social skills and expressive abilities are also enhanced by the practice.

As a result, participants will be more able to be creative in many areas of their private and working life.

An important aspect is the European perspective and experience gained as an added value by sharing the practices within the multicultural team of the *Art for Life* project. Thus, the 'Singing and Listening' creative techniques benefit from a creativity-friendly, imagination-fostering European environment.



Objectives of the session

- Create a friendly environment with some ice-breaking exercises
- Rhythm exercises
- Little melodies to share within the group
- Using some old folk songs and starting a choir
- Singing old folk songs and improvised sounds with melodic cells
- Researching the true expression of the feelings of the moment through our voices
- Listening to the others while they improvise
- Social interaction and musical communication
- The joy of being creative
- Experiencing creativity through singing and active listening

The session aims at making the participants feel free to use their own voice by overcoming blocks, prejudices and feelings of inadequacy in using it.

In the session, they will use their voice to communicate musically.

We are born with the potential to be musical, artistic, creative. We need a little help, though, in bringing this out of ourselves. But rarely do we get that help.

The session gives a chance to experience the pleasure of being active listeners and to discover the joy of singing in a creative music session with our peers. Participants feel confident to use their innate creative potential and explore new ways of knowing themselves and the others.





Beneficiaries

Adults with different jobs, such as employees, entrepreneurs, teachers, psychologists. Participants also include migrants.

Target groups needs

- To develop new ways to enhance creativity both at home and in the workplace.
- To share ideas on the value of being creative and reach an understanding in a collaborative environment with a European dimension
- To learn how to use the voice, develop listening skills and acquire new competences.

Specific Objective

- To gain a sense of freedom and natural creativity, during the session, which will remain afterwards. Participants will be able to transfer it into their work and personal life.
- To feel more open towards knowing other people and themselves, more confident in being able to get new experiences and previously unthought-of solutions to daily challenges.
- To experience a positive exchange with people from other European countries and together expand the concept of creativity.

Content

4 Creativity Labs with local learners and with those coming from countries involved in the project.





Activities

Listening

Two Examples of exercises developed in the Creative Lab

1. Participants are grouped by pairs. One of the two speaks about an experience, or a theme of interest to himself /herself, while the other listens. The listener has to only express his/her attentiveness with body language and needs to be completely silent. This will last six minutes. After that, the listener becomes the speaker and the other listens to him / her.

At the end, a plenary discussion /sharing of experiences follows.

“Have we been better speakers or better listeners?”



2. A music CD is played. Participants are invited to prepare themselves by following some simple steps concerning posture. It has been proved that by having the spine straight and the eyes closed, one can achieve better attention while listening. Hearing can benefit from an improved blood flow because the eyes do not require the same amount of blood circulation when there are no external stimuli.

The group of participants and the trainers are going to listen to a piece of music. After a while, everyone will write on a piece of paper his impressions, emotions, thoughts, feelings. Afterwards, participants share what they have written.



Singing and Improvising

Three Examples of exercises developed in the Creative Lab

1. Participants stand in a circle. The trainer, moving her/his hands in the air, create an ideal object and launch it to a participant in the circle. This will catch the object, re-shape it with some modifications and send it to another participant. (There's usually a lot of laughing during this exercise).
2. Participants sit in a circle. The trainer starts a rhythmic cell by clapping his/her hands. The participant sitting next to her/him follows by clapping the same rhythm. In turn all participants follow. It takes about a minute to complete the round.
Then, a new rhythmic cell is created by a participant and all repeat it in turn. After five, six rounds, participants are invited to choose a simple music instrument among those provided by the trainer and they perform the same exercise by using little instruments instead of clapping hands.



3. The trainer sings a brief and nice old folk song. He then repeats line by line the first stanza until participants can sing it easily. Once the little piece becomes familiar and all can sing it comfortably and with pleasure, participants will form two circles, one inside the other. Those who form the inner circle, sing the song. Those who are in the external one, use any sound they want, e.g. with voice: 'ssshh – sshh', 'trah – trah', 'uuuhh – uuuhh'; or clapping any part of their body; whispering or whistling... and in all ways suggested by individual creativity. The result is usually an amazing collective creative performance. At the end all participants share their feedback of the experience.



Tools

- CD player (and loudspeakers)
- Sheets of paper and pencils
- Little music instruments
- Comfortable chairs
- Room - big enough to sit comfortably in a circle

Timing

Four creative labs. Each session lasted 3 hours with 30 minutes break

Final aims

To give participants a tool to improve their creativity and involve them in future European projects on the topic.

Evaluation/testing

Evaluation was performed all the way through the experiences of the singing creative lab. The preferred modality has been sharing feedback orally and interviews by the trainers to participants with an informal approach



Recommended reading

Alfred A. Tomatis, *The Conscious Ear*, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, NY, 1991