

NOTE 11: OLDER AND WISER AND REFLECTIVE  
LEARNING GROUP  
ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK FORMS

ARTWORKS LONDON

FEBRUARY 2013

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## 1 OLDER AND WISER

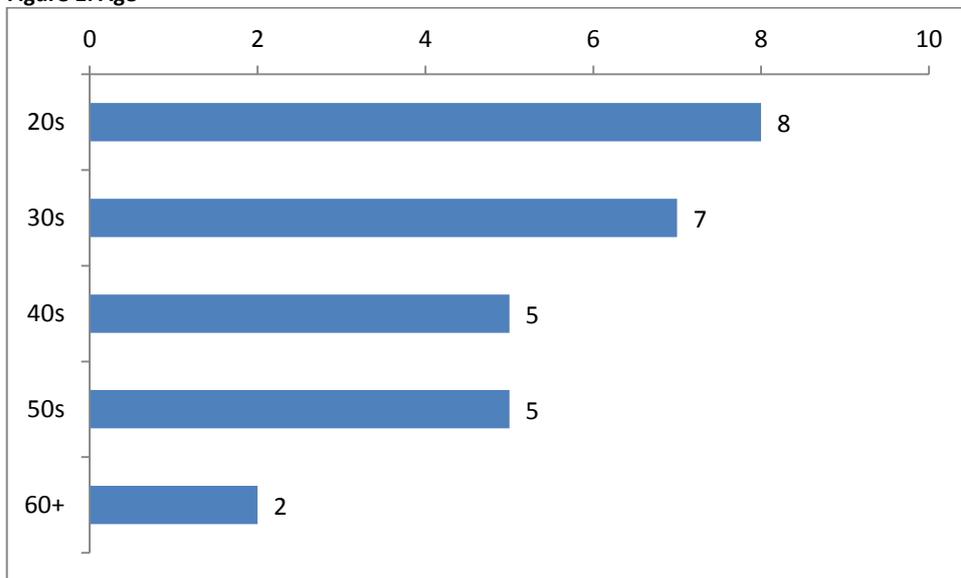
### 1.1 Introduction

The Older and Wiser workshop was one of the two CPD ideas piloted by Trinity Laban following the OPAN seminar. 32 people attended.

### 1.2 Baseline

Participants were recruited from different age groups.

**Figure 1: Age**



The average age for which participants had worked as an artist in participative practice was 8.37. There is a loose correlation between age and years of experience in participative practice, with a decline in the 60s.

**Figure 2: How many years have you worked as an artist in participative practice cross tabulated by age?**

	20s	30s	40s	50s	60+
	2.38	8.00	7.20	21.00	5.00

**Figure 3: Have you ever worked in participative practice with older people as participants?**

Yes, occasionally	37.5%	28.6%	80.0%	80.0%	50.0% (1)
Yes, frequently	25.0%	42.9%	20.0%	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)
No	37.5%	28.6%	0.0%	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)

Respondents were asked how confident they feel about working with older people in participative practice. The average score on the seven point scale was 4.07.

Average confidence was higher for those with more experience, but not greatly so. This could be taken to suggest a need for training or external support beyond training. Or it could

be linked to personality or the openness/risk taking of the creative process and artists' high standards.

**Figure 4: Average score for confidence cross tabulated by experience**

No	Yes, occasionally	Yes, frequently
2.83	4.14	5.00

Respondents were asked whether they have any concerns about working with older people in participative practice. Nine people described concerns, which we have coded as:

- **Lack of experience.** "Am I qualified enough without having a background in therapeutic arts/health care?" "Lack of experience in the field in general, probably not specific to older people."
- **Understanding health issues.** "Designing projects that really work therapeutically." "Safety." "Accessibility."
- **Understanding participants' limitations.** "Limits of movement and how to talk to sufferers of particular conditions." "Certain limitations on their bodies." "Knowing what their specific needs/requirements are - not being medically qualified to lead them in physical activity."
- **Setting the right tone.** "To address and guide them without patronising and to keep them interested during sessions." "Not making my work/sessions feel or appear childish and keeping professional boundaries." "Their expectations of being directed, passivity. How to encourage participants to put forward their ideas. How to handle group dynamics so that everyone gets a say. Overcoming fears of expressing ideas/sharing knowledge."
- **Programming.** "Dance teaching is focused on training for young people. there is not enough material/curriculum for working with older dancers/people." "My practice is digital storytelling; how to adapt my practice to needs; how to make it accessible."
- **Inclusivity.** "Ensuring that all feel able to participate."
- **Setting the right level.** "Getting the right balance between stimulating but not over challenging." "To increase memory (and thus repetition of dance routine) and concentration in a group setting."

Respondents were asked what they wanted to get out of the Older and Wiser session. 26 of the 27 replied, with comments which we have coded as:

- **Opportunities.** "How to be involved in more work with older people."
- **Information on the projects being carried out elsewhere.** "Knowledge of practices and activities that already exist." "Examples of good models of practice."
- **Ideas.** "Creative ideas and confidence with creative activities."
- **Knowledge of how the practice works.** "More knowledge about what is done/with older people in visual and performing arts."
- **Insight into how other art forms work with older people.** "Seeing different approaches to working with older people from different art forms and interdisciplinary approaches."
- **Increased confidence.** "To talk to those who have experience of working with older people and to feel more confident about leading a session on my own." "More confidence to develop and continue work with older participants."

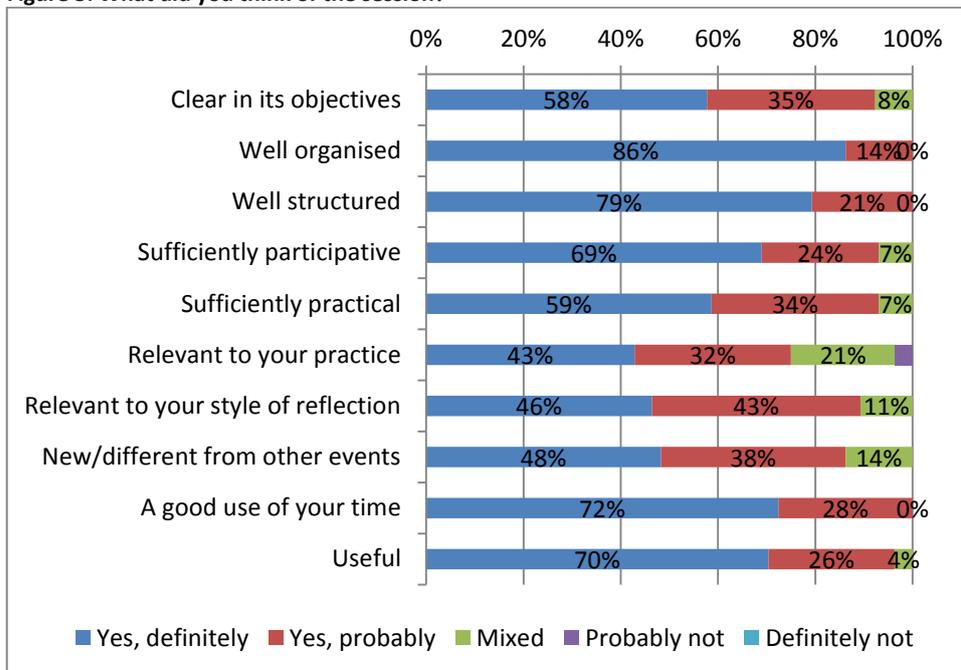
- **Links.** “Meet others working in this area of the arts and this geographical area.” “Meet practitioners, organisations, experts, potential collaborators.”
- **Skills.** “Learn new practices & tips.” “Greater confidence on structuring sessions appropriately.”
- **Reflection.** “Reflect on what I currently do and thinking of ways to enhance practice.”
- **Sharing.** “Energy - sharing of ideas.” “Hear others' experiences.” “Information exchange.”

### 1.3 Workshop end

We have 29 workshop end forms.

All respondents thought the workshop was well organised, well structured and a good use of their time. 90% or more said it was clear in its objectives, sufficiently participative, sufficiently practical and useful.

Figure 5: What did you think of the session?



Comments were extremely positive:

“I thought the day was incredibly energising and inspiring! Feels like a good springboard for now attending more specialised CPD events - really like the ethos of shared practice & the invitation to attend/observe sessions as it is extremely useful to take part and see things in practice.”

“Was very useful to have participants attend.”

“I am extremely glad to know that in this ungenerous political climate the passion and desire to do this work is still alive even almost as an ‘underground movement’ as one of the participants described it. Thank you.”

“One of the best CPDs I've been on.”

“Thought provoking, enjoyable day.”

“Loved it. Learnt loads.”

Comments particularly mentioned the need for follow on activity:

“I feel like flagging up the art/therapy question was useful but then think there could be more differentiation & highlighting of work which is not in a care setting. Would be useful to hear more from people working with 'younger older' people too.

“Interesting day but feel to some degree disabled or possibly that I was naive in thinking I could do this without professional training, a plethora of skills or access to mentoring/supervision. It hasn't caused me to give up but has definitely given me more questions than answers.”

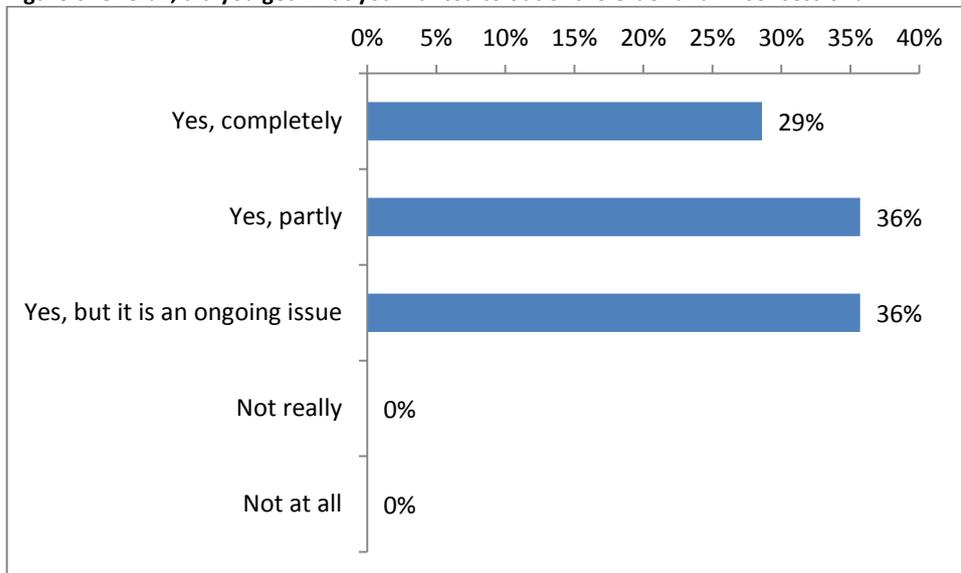
“It was a bit too rushed because trying to cover so much.”

“Excellent, but we need more!”

“Information overload (in a good way!)”

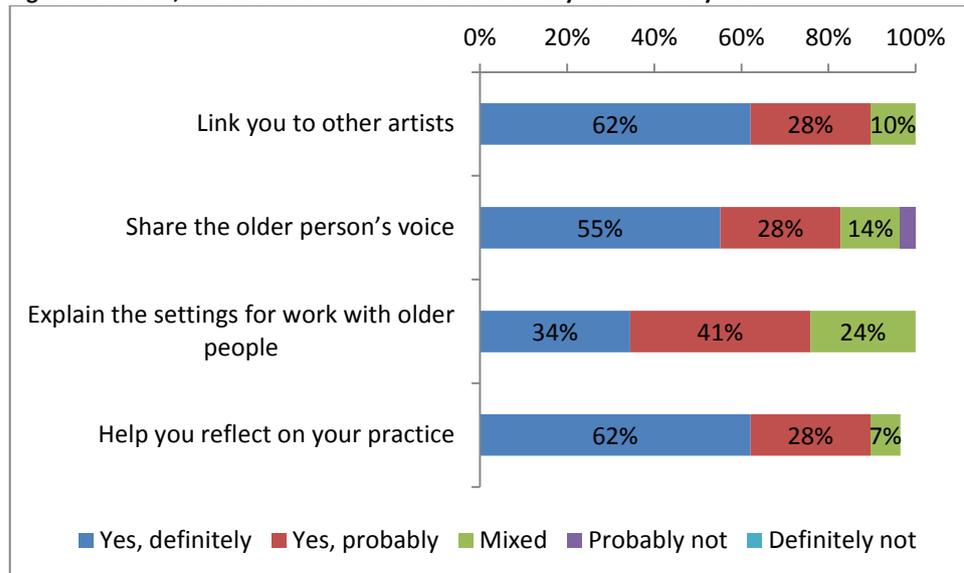
Everyone got what they wanted out of the session, completely or partly, while 36% also emphasised the need for future sessions.

**Figure 6: Overall, did you get what you wanted to out of the Older and Wiser session?**



Respondents were asked again how confident they felt about working with older people in participative practice. The average was 4.97 on the seven point scale, which showed an increase compared to the baseline, but also scope for future change.

90% of respondents said that the session helped them reflect on their practice and linked them to other artists. 83% said the session helped to share the older person's voice. 76% said the session helped to explain the settings for work with older people.

**Figure 7: Overall, did the Older and Wiser session do any of these for you?**

Comments were very positive:

"I liked the focus on practical things like how to get into working with older people. Also discussing the state of this area of the arts. I liked that everyone got to talk to someone from a different workshop. I liked the group discussions. I felt they were really informative listening to other practitioners' experiences. The most valuable part of the day was participants giving their experiences, what they are looking for in participating in arts workshops, why they are interested, how they get involved etc. All in all, it was a really beneficial day. I have a little bit of experience in working with older people and have been wanting to get more but have been worried that I don't have the right skillset as I work mainly with children. But now I realise I do, it's just a matter of understanding and knowing what I want to achieve. Today has put me much more at ease and given me more confidence to find ways to work on projects with older people."

"Thanks for a wonderful event it was a great day and hopefully will create new links and networks in the sector."

"My main learning points were: practical uses of props in dance & drama; protecting yourself as a facilitator in terms of safeguarding with safe touch or pushing participants beyond their physical capabilities; adapting activities for active ability ranges; use of the term 'creative movement' in exchange for dance as that has different connotations."

Participants were asked again about their concerns about working with older people in participative practice. 18 people replied, with comments perhaps at a different level of detail to those from the baseline:

- **Programming.** "This aren't structured as for example an educational environment would be." "How and how quickly do you introduce new and unfamiliar repertoire."
- **Partnership.** "How to work within and alongside the organisations and institutions making sure it's fully accessible." "Would prefer to do it as part of a team rather than as individual practitioner."
- **Lack of experience.** "I need to do a lot more research!"

- **Health** “Issues of dementia - will look into further training.” “Advanced dementia and depression.” “Specific safety, troubleshooting.”
- **Quality.** “Being the best I can be in terms of quality.”
- **Linking to practice.** “No concerns but just unclear as to how my particular model of drama practice fits into the spectrum of settings and practice styles.”
- **Funding.**
- **Understanding participants’ limitations.** “Working with limitations, physical, psychological, learning abilities, social.” “Knowing their bodies and limitations but after today confident it changes per group.”
- **Motivating.** “Getting them to join in with singing.” “The barriers people have within themselves that prevent them from joining in with art activities.”

Respondents were asked, if TL ran this kind of event again, what should be kept. Answers were:

- All of it!
- The discussion groups.
- The case studies/key speakers from different organisations.
- The keynote.
- The exchange in pairs.
- Time for discussion and reflection.
- Hearing from other practitioners.
- Hearing from older participants themselves.
- The mix of activities.
- The integrity and thoughtfulness.

“To be honest all sessions worked excellently and were informative. Make sure you keep older participants - essential. Maybe have more.”

“I found the group discussions excellent. If you are not a confident networker this is the perfect way to exchange ideas. Also the groups were given a structure to set them off but allowed to evolve naturally as well.”

Respondents were asked what they would change or add. Responses were:

- Invite non-arts professionals - we are preaching to the converted.
- Give examples of professionals working with a business sector model i.e. no funding.
- Give more examples of work with active elders.
- More involvement of older people. E.g. the practical sessions, to demo a session.
- Give more time for these topics. E.g. time for participants to attend both practical sessions, time to practice delivery.
- More specific information. E.g. about certain contexts, about good practice, how to structure sessions.

- Next level training.

All respondents said they would be interested in attending other CPD on participative practice with older people. Suggested topics were:

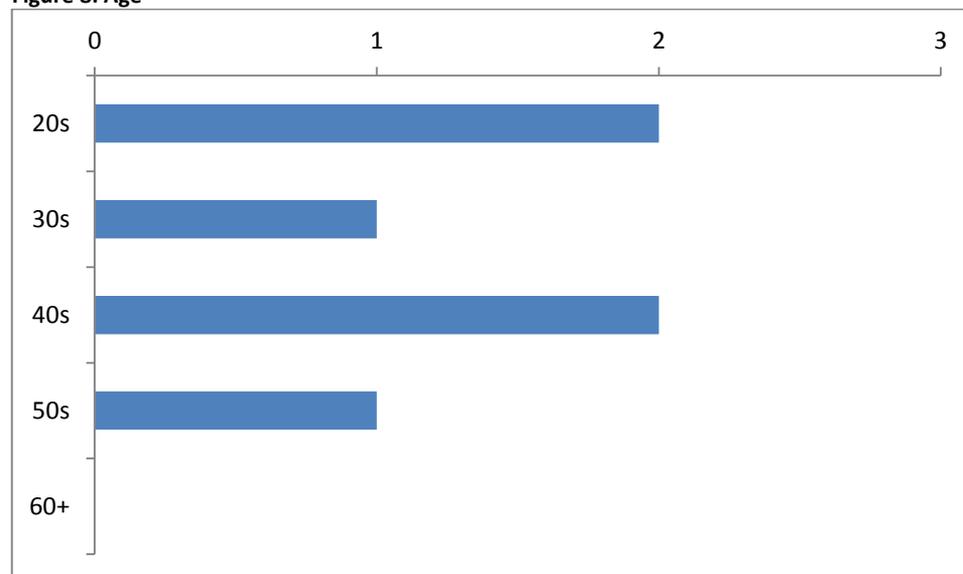
- Specific art forms e.g. digital practices - photography, video; verbal medium - storytelling/poetry.
- Reminiscence.
- Intergenerational work.
- How to get started, find collaborators, and ensure good practice.
- How to have useful supervision while learning on the job
- Evaluating practice and presenting this to funders.
- Basic principles of good practice. Mentoring
- Working with dementia sufferers.
- Approaches to mixed groups/abilities.

## 2 REFLECTIVE LEARNING GROUP

### 2.1 Introduction

We have six replies from the seven participants.

Figure 8: Age



### 2.2 Practice

On average artists had worked as an artist in participative practice for 11.5 years.

On average artists had worked in participative practice with older people as participants for 6.5 years.

On average 55% of artists' participative work over the last year has been with older people.

Respondents were asked how they would describe their style of reflection. Answers suggest:

- **A diary or notebook methodology.** "Discussion, written diary and images." "Notes, scribbles and ramblings. Usually in my note book alongside plans and thoughts for delivery."
- **A multi-media approach.** "I feed-back to colleagues things that have gone well and things that have gone badly - usually via words and pictures." "Checklist, blog, images, writing."
- **Focus on the participants' experience.** "Words about each section and about participants' reactions and contributions to understand what makes them feel good."
- **Most reflection is for personal use.** "Occasionally I write reports and words."
- **A shared experience.** "I think, I ponder, I 'meditate', I discuss and 'de-brief' with colleagues."

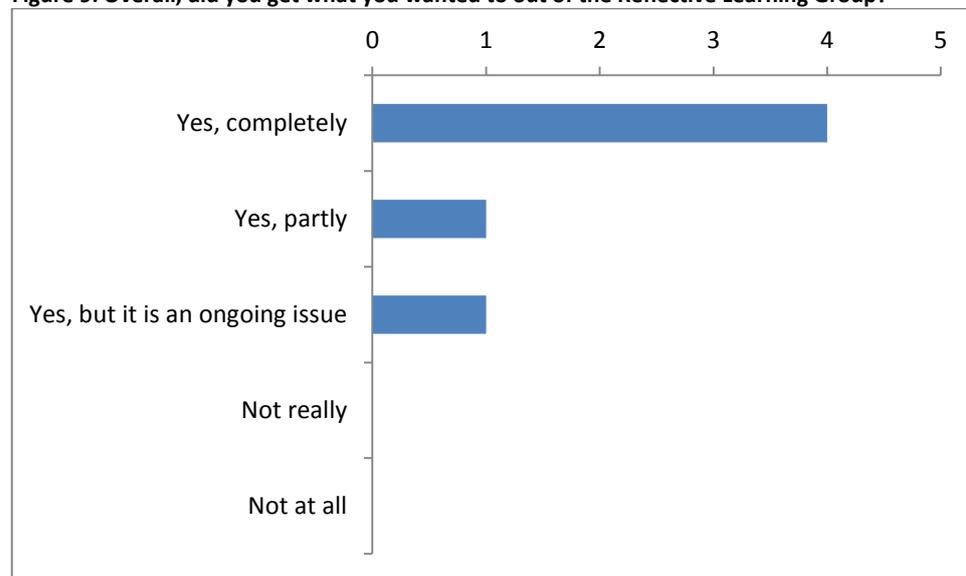
## 2.3 Expectations

Respondents were asked what they wanted to get out of the Reflective Learning Group. Answers were:

- **Confidence.** “More confidence in my practice and understanding of different ways of how to reach older people.”
- **Understanding other artists’ approach.** “I wanted to see how other people work, especially younger artists.”
- **Insight.** “A better and broader understanding of the nature of the work I do, issues relating to this, and insight into approach of other practitioners in the field.”
- **Connection.** “To discuss and share issues and experiences of participatory arts practice with older people with other practitioners. To identify common ground or divergence. To assess whether a strategy can be developed to both promote and champion this type of arts practice. To find support and nurture from fellow practitioners.”
- **Confirmation and learning.** “Lots and lots of confirmation of my learning and learning new little skills from others and learning that you're not on your own!” “A sense of other people’s practice with older adults, and also to either confirm my own practice or point it in the right direction if needed.”

All of the six got what they wanted out of the group, with one saying this is an ongoing issue.

**Figure 9: Overall, did you get what you wanted to out of the Reflective Learning Group?**



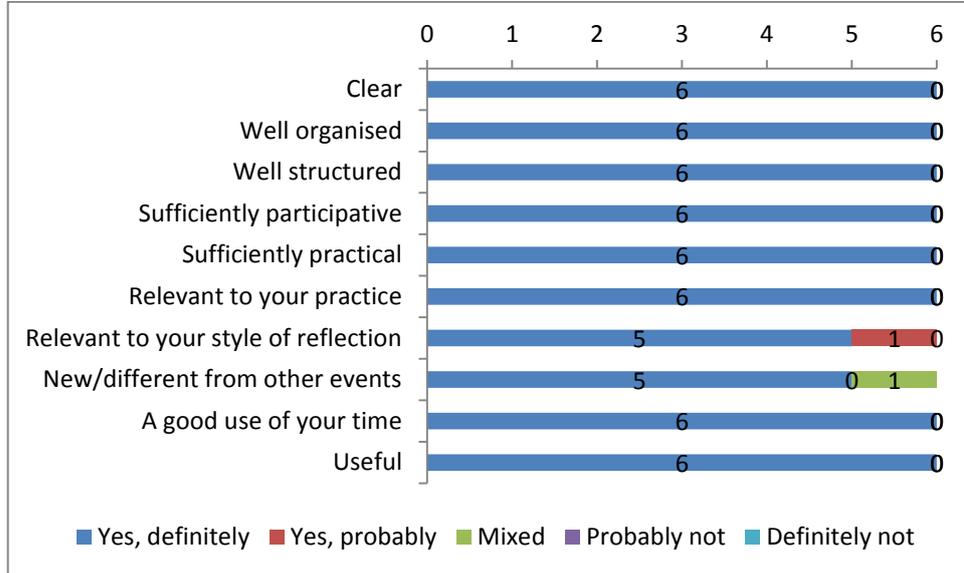
“We have the tools to become a powerful and vocal lobbying body.”

## 2.4 Process

Respondents definitely thought the first session was clear, well organised, well structured, sufficiently participative, sufficiently practical, relevant to their practice, a good use of their time, and useful.

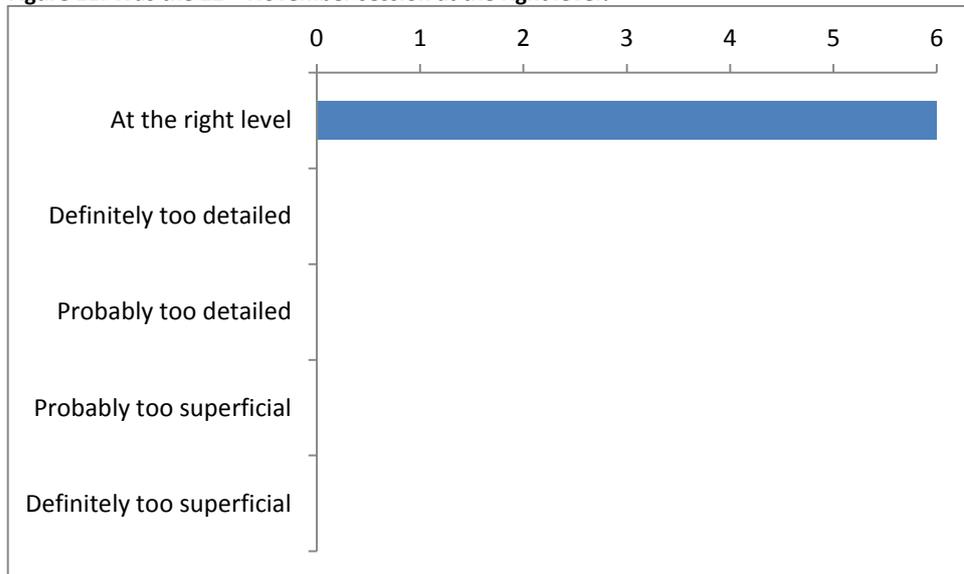
“I am always a little sceptical and cynical about these types of events, having experienced many in the past that have 'nice words' but that 'go nowhere'. It is very refreshing to leave an event like this, devoid of scepticism and cynicism.”

**Figure 10: What did you think of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013 session? Was it:**



Respondents said the session was at the right level.

**Figure 11: Was the 22<sup>nd</sup> November session at the right level?**



Respondents were asked if TL ran this kind of event again, what should be kept. Four simply said ‘all of it’. Asked what TL should change or add, respondents generally couldn’t think of anything apart from more time and more depth.

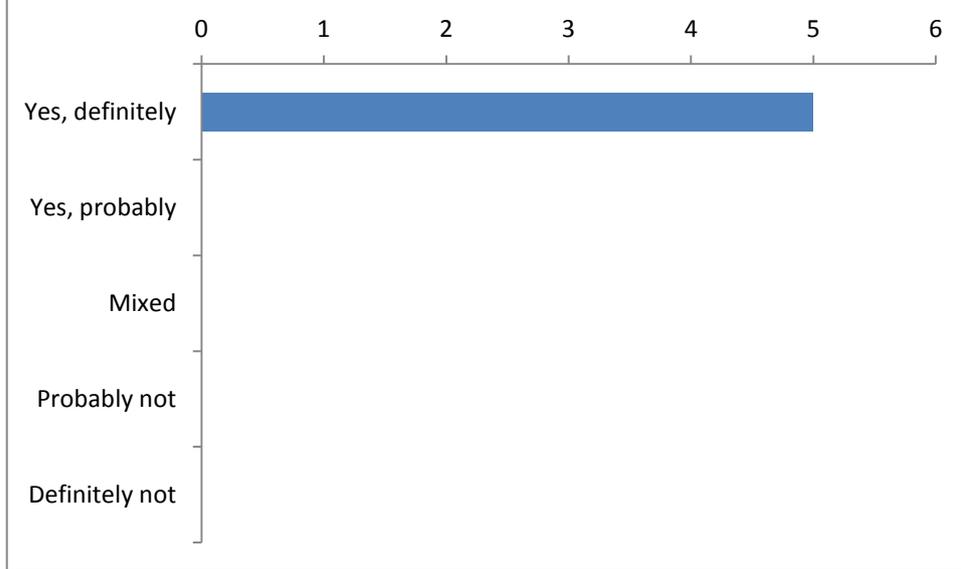
The five respondents who took part thought the observation and feedback sessions were definitely useful.

“It was great to see artists in their practice settings.”

“It was inspiring. And it made me feel 'alive to it all'.”

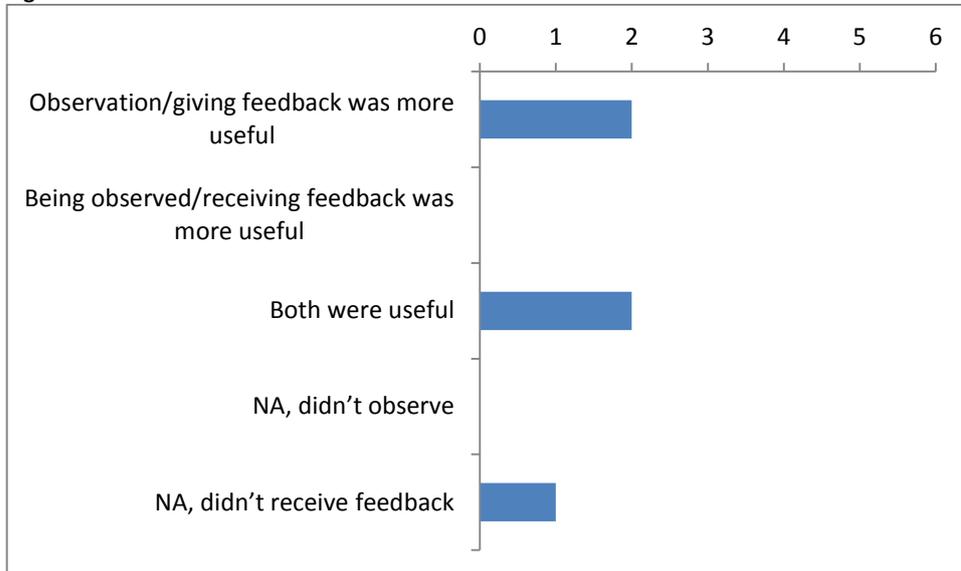
“I certainly want to do more. If you were doing these sessions again I would encourage everyone to attend at least two different artists and art forms.”

**Figure 12: What did you think about the observation and feedback sessions: Were they useful?**

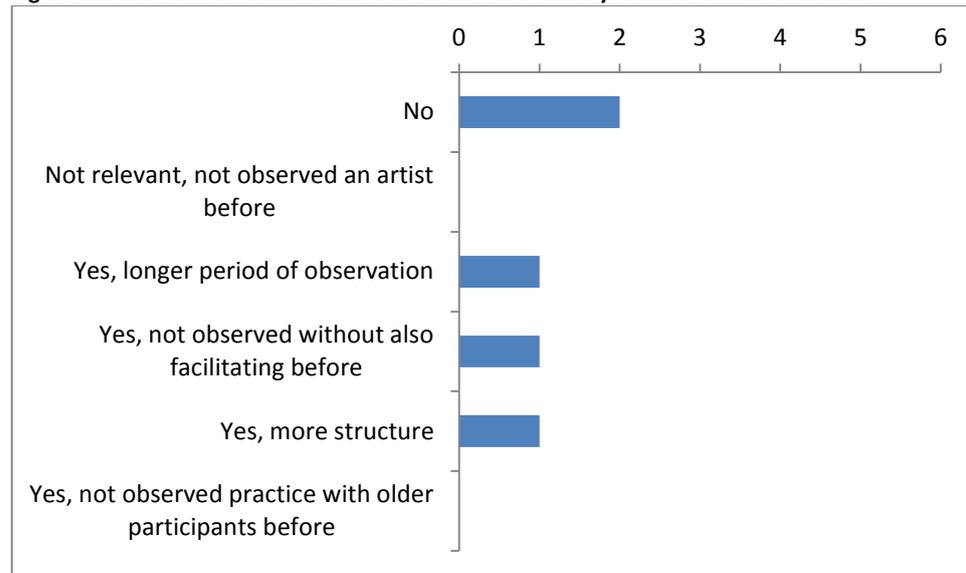


Observing was slightly more useful. Comments suggest a couple of practical problems: the timing of observation during the Xmas break, and the uneven interest of artists, several wanting to see the same person.

**Figure 13: Which was most useful?**



Three respondents said the observation was different from other times they had observed an artist.

**Figure 14: Was the observation different from other times you have observed an artist?**

Respondents were asked whether there were any lessons about how to get the best out of observation. Answers were:

- **Clarify the role.** “Another time I would check beforehand with the artist whether I'm expected to sit quietly and observe or be part of the group. It's probably better to sit out, but this can be off-putting for participants. Clarification needed in different situations.” “Be an external observer for part of it, and a participant for another.”
- **Be receptive.** “Be open-minded. Be prepared to participate. Be prepared to be surprised. Talk to people. Ask questions.” “Go to an observation with an open mind and try to review the teacher/artist delivery style from many views, e.g. would it work if I was an elderly participant with dementia, or actively elderly, in a care home etc.”
- **Get different views.** “Move around the space where possible, engage with the group. Or was this supposed to be a static/more formal observation?”

Respondents were asked whether there were any lessons about how to get the best out of being observed/feedback:

- **Debrief.** “Make sure to have a chat with observer at the end.” “Encourage people's feedback directly after the session as it can often become diluted at a later date.”
- **Be normal.** “Be calm and just run your normal session to get honest and beneficial feedback.”

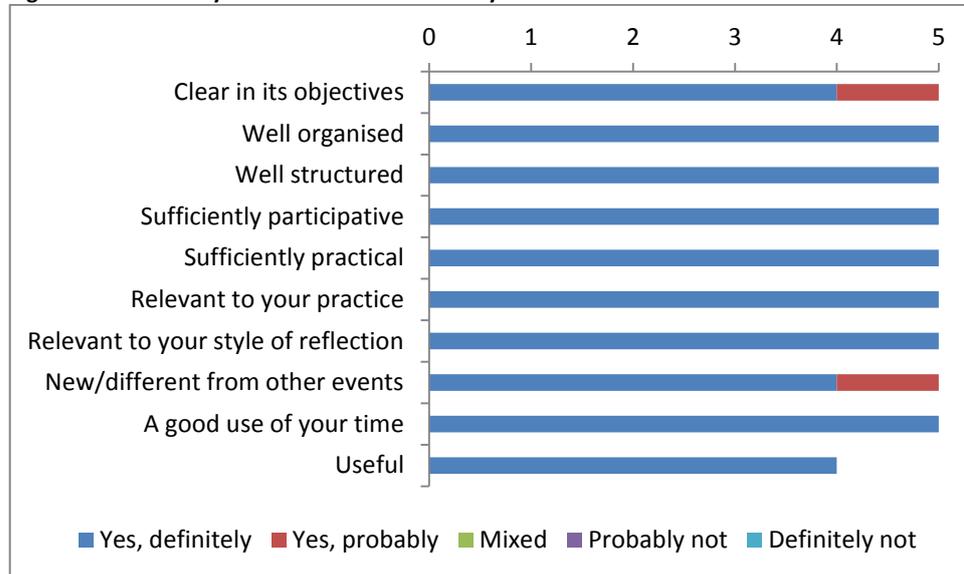
Three artists said they changed their practice between the two sessions, as a result of the first session, either using specific tools or following new trains of thought.

Three artists said they changed their reflection between the two sessions, as a result of the first session, mainly increasing the depth, structure and recording of reflection.

“I am looking at different ways to discuss and explain experiences with and to colleagues. I have a clearer idea of how to structure reflection so that it can be of benefit to colleagues and fellow practitioners as well as to myself.”

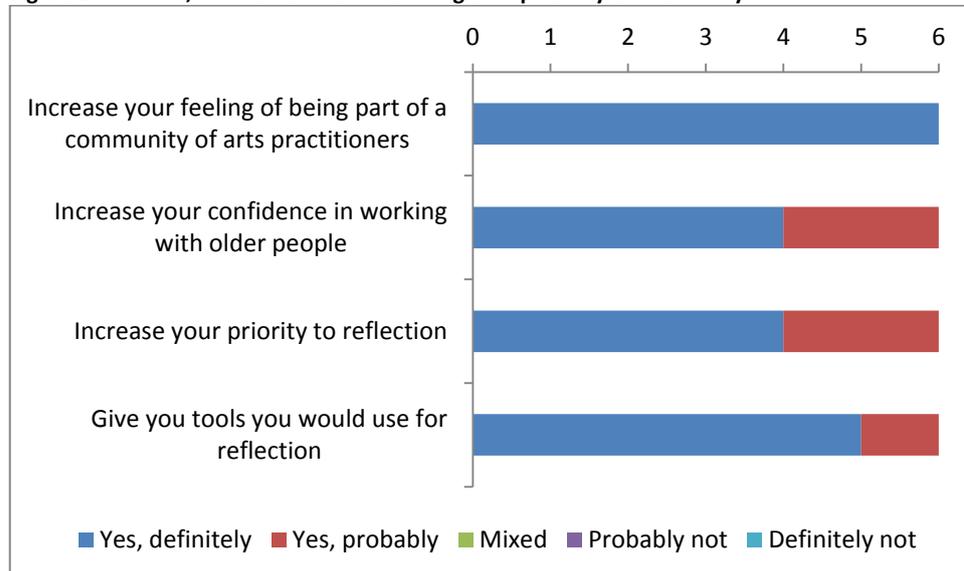
All respondents said that the second session was well organised, well structured, sufficiently participative, sufficiently practical, relevant to their style of reflection, a good use of time and useful.

**Figure 15: What did you think of the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014 session? Was it:**



Respondents said that the Reflective Learning Group increased their feeling of being part of a community of arts practitioners, gave them tools for reflection, increased their priority to reflection and increased their confidence in working with older people.

**Figure 16: Overall, did the Reflective Learning Group do any of these for you?**



“It offered up the opportunity to develop a system of mutual support between practitioners.”

### **3 CONCLUSION**

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These two types of CPD served different purposes. Both types of CPD were extremely well received and seen as well organised and delivered. Old and Wiser had the advantage of supporting a larger number of artists at the same time. The Reflective Learning Group had an advantage in being seen as more self contained and self organising. There is strong demand for continuation, whether in networking or attending training.

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## APPENDIX ONE: THE OLDER AND WISER PROGRAMME

SPECIALIST TRAINING DAY  
 OLDER AND WISER  
 7 FEBRUARY 2014

TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE  
 OF MUSIC & DANCE

### PROGRAMME

#### SESSION ONE

LOCATION: Laban Building Studio 1

9:30 Registration/tea & coffee

10:00 Introduction from Veronica Jobbins, Trinity Laban  
 Key Notes – Damian Hebron, London Arts & Health Forum

10.30 Case studies presented by:

Entelechy Arts - David Slater on 'Meet Me @ The Albany'

Trinity Laban - Kate Wakeling on 'Retired Not Tired' and creativity

Age Exchange - David Savill & Belinda Sosinowicz "R.A.D.I.Q.L. Reminiscence Arts and Dementia Impact on Quality of Life"

11.00 Short break

11.15 Group discussions – organisations, practitioners, older participants and delegates  
 4 groups chaired by David Slater, David Savill, Louisa Borg-Costanzi Potts and Kate Atkinson (see notes below)

Studio 1, Café Meeting Room and Conference Room 1

12:30 \*LUNCH

#### SESSION TWO

1.30 Practical workshops:

Charlene Low, Maria Ghoumrassi and Anna Brown (Studio 1)

Shane Waltener and Zoe Gilmour (Café meeting room)

Simon Purins and Stella Howard (Studio 7)

2.30 Tea/coffee and feedback on practical workshops

3.00 Q& A - Experienced artists reflect on their practice (with Veronica Jobbins)

3.45 Plenary/feedback

4.00 Finish. Opportunity to network until 4.30

#### Ideas for Chairs at 11.15am to lead discussion

Everyone introduces themselves

Reiterate the purpose of discussion – unpicking the morning so far

What this sort of work is hoping to achieve

The breadth of the work

What participants get out of it, changes in participants

Well-being agenda/positive ageing