

SMALL STEPS



BIG NOISE

Evaluation Report

Caroline Barnes

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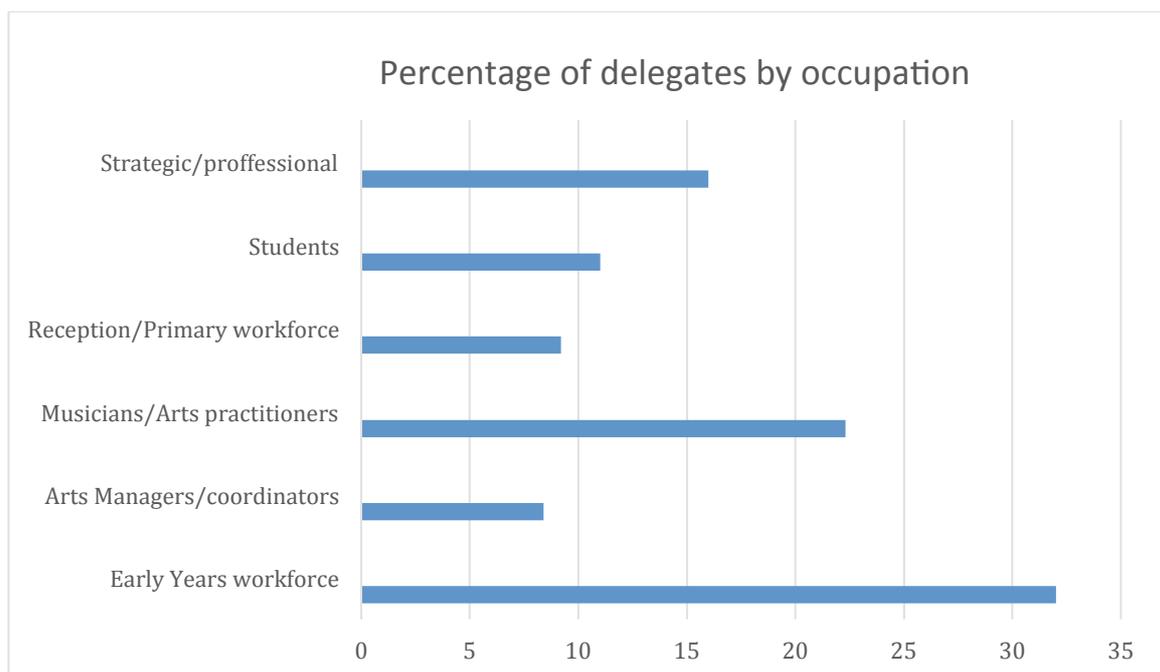
Small Steps Big Noise

On Thursday 15 March 2018 at The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre in Taunton, Take Art welcomed over 150 Early Years practitioners, artists, music leaders, settings, regional music hubs, funders, researchers and strategic partners from all over the country to the South West's biggest ever Early Years Expressive Arts Conference.

Led by leading Somerset Arts organisation Take Art, this completely sold out event took place at a key moment in the politics of Early Years education, when the need to champion the incredible benefits of creativity for 0-5s and beyond is being set against a new government focus on literacy and numeracy.

Gina Westbrook, Director of Early Years Creativity at Take Art said,

"This was the most incredible gathering of people who were curious about the power of creativity in the early years. I was really amazed by the depth of feeling from all ages and sectors, from the two and three year olds who came to see the Hopper performance to Early Childhood students, to the EYPs, to the artists, to the strategic partners, to the wise gurus still engaged and passionate."



Delegates' highlights from the day

The keynote speaker, Dr Susan Young was cited by a third of the delegates as their personal highlight from the day, inspirational, professional, thought provoking and incredibly engaging were all used to describe her talk.

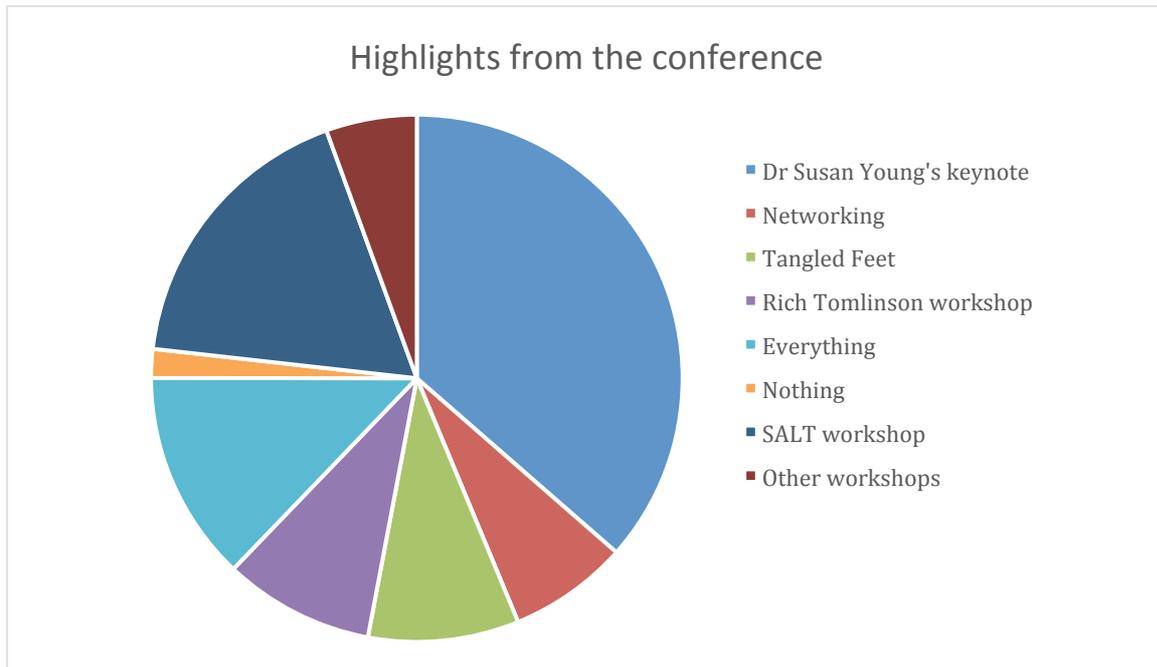
Matt Griffiths from Youth Music and Rhona Matheson from Starcatchers were also highly regarded.

The overall quality of the day was praised with a range of passionate speakers, practical sessions, inspirational keynote and powerful networking with likeminded people all seen as delegate highlights.

"Meeting and chatting to colleagues, old and new, familiar names and complete strangers. Being immersed in this wonderful child-centered musical play pedagogy with like-minded people"

"Just feeling: "Yes we're doing this!" after two years of keeping the faith with our project it's finally beginning to get established"

"I thoroughly enjoyed all of it and can't wait for next year!! The workshops were enjoyable, informative and relevant and the company was great too"



"Walking quietly into the dark magical room the SALT team had set up. Although it felt unnatural not to speak to others, it was interesting using the equipment on offer to communicate non-verbally"

Application of the learning

Respondents were asked how they will apply their experience to their work in their setting/role? Responses have been loosely grouped into reaffirmation of practice, practical short term actions, influences on technique or approach and longer term influence on strategy and planning.

Reaffirmation

- Reminding myself that children are "metaphoric, dynamic, mode-hopping, pattern narrative thinking wild things" ... And trust my process.
- Ideas, confidence, colleague sharing not just in early years!!!
- Lots of possibilities to support arts/music in setting and may have chance to link with Soundwaves project.
- By informing it and my higher studies. It sets the scene, grounds my work and offers it a research based, philosophical foundation from which to build from the ground up.
- To continue to believe (especially working with babies 0-12 months), reflect and report on what we do. I feel encouraged and that here understands out there.

Practical short term actions:

- I have already set myself a task for the weekend building a sound wall for the pre-school, using tins, metals, plastics, woods, for children to explore different sounds. I also want to build a stage so that the children can perform in their own bands with different instruments and equipment.
- So much to apply so I have scheduled out a 3 year plan as well as quick wins for the rest of the term.
- I think we will be purchasing a makemakey board!
- Encourage students to be more creative and confident in using drama in their workplaces.
- Using some of the techniques from each session I attended and applying it into my own practice. For example the techniques that SALT Music are using for pre-verbal children.
- Cascade key points and sentiments from the pedagogy - as a refreshing reminder of a child's perspective and outlook. Inform colleagues of the work carried out by Starcatchers,
- I will lead activity's using ideas from Tangled Feet.
- I will do this next term and assess COHORT data.

Approach and technique

- Planning more drama and music as part of a routine Read up and stay connected with research, be open to new ideas and maintain a dialogue with others involved in Early Years Arts.
- Having more non-verbal time with young children (spoken word), listening for sounds and cues to respond to.
- Try to encourage to make music with everyday items.

- Less expectation and pressure on communication, let the children lead.
- Hopefully discuss with music leaders about how we can fit it into our sessions.
- Reflect on ways to bridge the learning gap.
- Developing the adult role in guiding and inspiring children.
- I will review our approach to creative experiences. Look into a longitudinal study of the arts and spend more time observing what is already happening creatively in the setting.
- Resolve to give myself more rest and energy to be inspired.
- I will make my work 'always just on the edge of chaos'.
- Made me look at music and creativity in a different way so I will plan for more opportunities for this in my placement and incorporate this into my studies.
- I will remember that I have experience and imagination, which is very valuable to share.
- We need to look into further ways of embracing imagination and creativity in the curriculum, especially with the older children.
- I will use ideas to research the area more.
- Reflect on how this influence can be seen not just in content of provision but also in facilitation.

Strategy and planning

- With permission, I'd like to share Sue's slides to music education hubs and open conversations with them about a more youth-led approach to music education.
- Take discussions back to rest of the Youth Music team. Share presentations/handouts. Discuss the five principles guiding arts and EY collaborations.
- I will implement some of the ideas from the workshop and share with the Early Years team. I will look to involve our school in projects and hopefully feed creativity up into Key stage 1!
- Input to our own EYFS development programme.
- Support as an Early Years Consultant to renew my commitment to EY Music.
- More confident to support EYs colleagues in Devon.
- Some big thinking to take out to settings which I hope to use in my training to inspire settings,
- Wiltshire Creative are exploring how to expand our Early Years offer in the coming months. This conference has helped uncover potential partnerships and successful project models we can look at for inspiration.
- Hoping to include more non-verbal communication in my 0 -3 music sessions.

Training and future development

What CPD training would you like in the future?

There was a clear call for a continued professional development offer from across the sector - from very practical hands on tips and ideas to strategic planning. The range of ideas reflected the audience for the day. There was a sense that creative conferences such as Small Steps Big Noise were welcomed and such a rich variety of opportunities rarely came along for individuals or their whole workforce. Suggestions included:

Subject areas/themes

- Music, specifically singing, using props, combined with dance, very practical ideas (although no one mentioned songs or songbooks).
- Combining music and story-telling.
- Singing for the non-specialists.
- Extending musical ideas.
- More SALT specific sessions. Would love more tips on sensory type music sessions too.
- Dance and movement with very young children.

There were some respondents who want more **general creative opportunities** to explore:

- Interested in any creative themes, especially music making, art and storytelling, and moving these outdoors with natural materials.
- Hands on training bringing all the arts to life.
- More cross-over of disciplines within the arts.

Most respondents (again reflected in the delegate subsectors) were focused on EY settings but for some they were looking at CPD to be applied to EY at school or in the **wider community**:

- To develop training on the use of creativity and imagination beyond Early Years
- Content that appeals to family audiences and ideas of combining cross-related arts in a family-day-out setting.
- To be given as many different ideas as possible to use in the primary school setting.
- SEND based workshops , More play ideas for nurseries/crèches .
- Working with SEN.

Strategic areas

Delegates also wanted to keep hold of the opportunity for higher level discussions, sharing of research based innovative practices, to spread the word and make this essential EY musical experience available to all children and practitioners. There was a recognition that there were few opportunities for strategic leaders and EY music practitioners to talk, discuss, debate and understand each other's work.

Specific areas for CPD included:

- Comparing models of cascading EYs thinking and practice through to KS1 and even KS2.
- Supporting children to hold onto their inherent music skills learned through play.
- Pedagogical models to support this post EYs.
- Evaluation, measuring success of Early Years work.
- Creating and managing strategic partnerships.
- Funding and connecting with funders.
- Developing artistic networks.
- Bid writing and funding applications.

For some the balance of strategic and practical was a less successful mix with two respondents feeling the day could be repeated with a greater emphasis on practical ideas for their setting. *"This day felt more about people talking about what they do but not inspiring us to implement it in our settings"*.

Overall experience of the day

95% of delegates who responded to our feedback survey rated the conference either good or excellent.

