Module BMPF7326D - Understanding perceptions of signed song in hearing choirs and optimising its use

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Project Proposal

The Context

I was introduced to British Sign Language (BSL) signed song in 2021, which initiated a joyful journey of discovery. As a singing teacher and choir director, I now use signed song in my community choirs, children's classes and private teaching.

There is evidence that many people, hearing and Deaf, respond positively to the rhythm and emotional tone of signed song (Making Music, 2017; Pereira, 2021; The Essay: A Different Way to Listen, with Paul Whittaker OBE, 2024). This project is intended to gauge and build on the response of my singers to signed song.

The Justification

It is important to me that members of my community choirs feel invested in what we do. I hope to build a more nuanced picture of their perceptions and plan collaboratively to take signed song further.

While there is a lot of research into our neurological response to gesture in music (Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson 2001; Niedenthal, 2007; Lamm and Majdandžić, 2015; Lai, Howerton and Desai, 2019; Shewell, 2020), there is very little in signed song. I would like to highlight this gap.

The Intended Impact

I hope this project will demonstrate some of the benefits of signed song for choirs and highlight some of its challenges.

The doctoral theses of Pereira (2021) and Lim (2022) both discuss signed song performance, the ethics of cultural appropriation and the possibilities for interaction between hearing and deaf communities. Music therapy for the deaf (Gfeller, 1987; Gfeller and Darrow, 1987; Gfeller, 2016; Kyriakou, 2022) appears in some research. As concerts and festivals increasingly provide BSL interpretations (Bossey, 2020; Festivals, 2025), there is room for more investigation.

The Outlined Intention

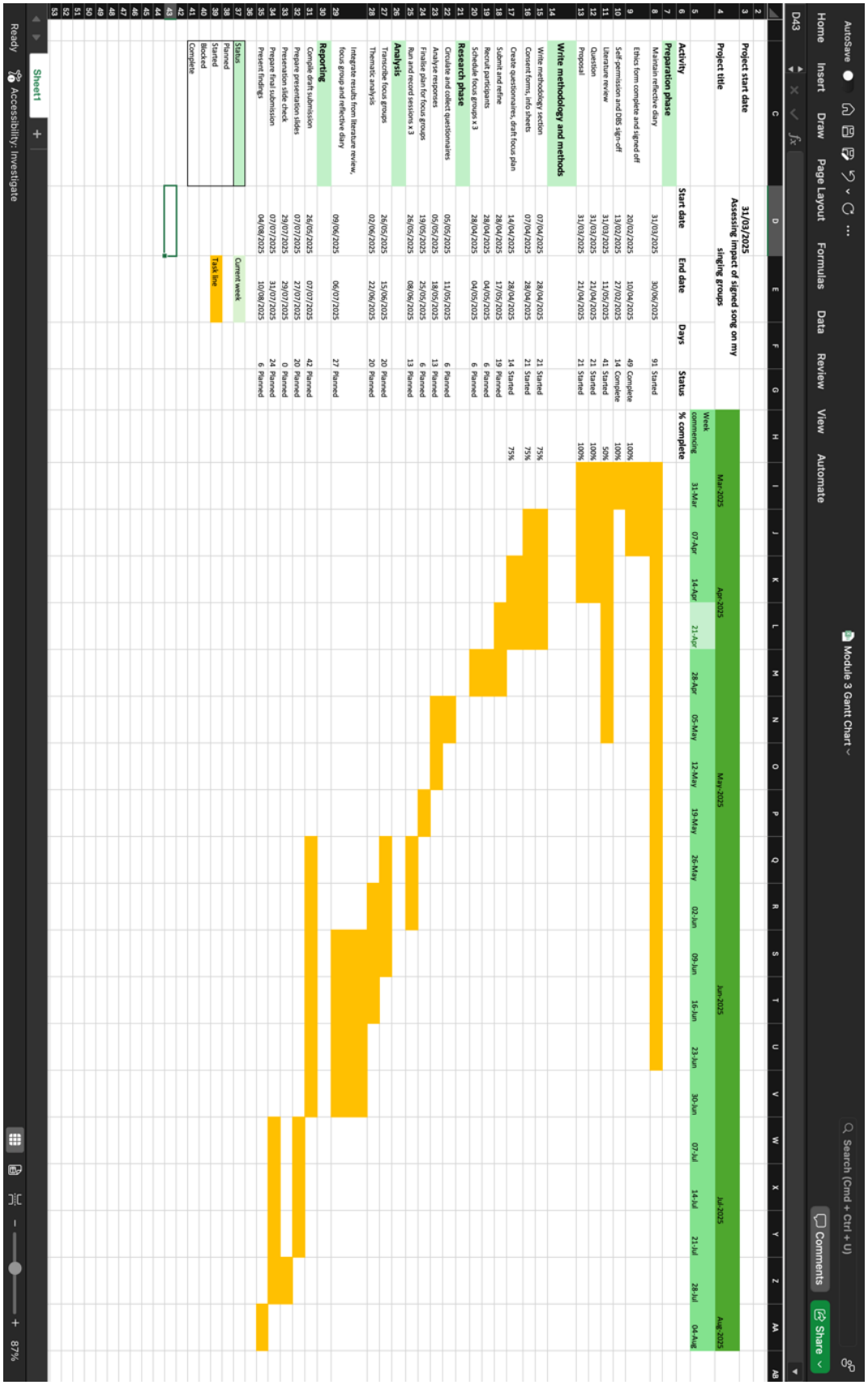


Figure 1: Gantt chart representation of project timeline

My views align with a pragmatic paradigm, focused on a practical outcome by flexibly combining current research with the subjective views of participants (Pretorius, 2024). Participatory action group theory involves discussion with input from all stakeholders leading to a consensus on action to be taken (Bradbury and Reason, 2003; Mabetha et al., 2023) which aligns with this paradigm and my vision of incorporating the

views of my choir members to improve my practice. Data will be gathered through focus groups (Hall, Williams and Daniel, 2010; Kraschnewski et al., 2014; Lundström and Lundström, 2023). The outcome of the participatory action group process should be that the groups involved will feel invested in signed song and the difference it could make for the choir and our audience. A qualitative approach suits the needs of this project as I am interested in the quality of their response and their feelings relating to signed song.

I plan to recruit 6-12 participants each from my adult community choir, children's choir and school signed song club. Initial questionnaires will establish common ground for the focus groups to explore in more depth (Bradbury, 2015). I will take a qualitative approach to understand their perceptions using thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006).

I will maintain a reflective journal throughout this project to interrogate my processes and progress (Braun, Clarke, and Hayfield, 2022).

The ethics and insider research

I have applied for Disclosure clearance as I will be working with children. All participants will complete consent forms, as will the guardians of child participants. All responses will be anonymised.

As a passionate advocate for signed song and choir director, I have authority which could influence the response of members. To mitigate this potential bias, I will encourage a full range of responses.

Another issue is appropriation of Deaf culture (Kyriakou, 2022). I will continue to use interpretations by Paul Whittaker, a Deaf musician. I hope to learn BSL to understand this culture, and Deaf perceptions of signed song, better.

The project has been through ethical review by the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) ethics committee.

Personal learning outcomes

- Plan and implement this project in an achievable and timely way
- Establish a deeper picture of how my choirs respond to signed song
- Plan to improve the way I teach signed song
- Improve audience interaction using signed song

Report

Module BMPF7362D - Understanding perceptions of signed song in hearing choirs and optimising its use

Introduction

Within my teaching practice I am musical director to an adult community choir and a children's singing group. Having discovered signed song through the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS), and since joining their British Sign Language (BSL) online choir, I am excited about the possibilities and joys of performing BSL translations while singing. Over the last two years I have introduced my groups to signed song, Deaf musician Paul Whittaker leading two workshops with the adult choir. My impression is that signed song has had a positive effect on their singing, and I wanted to explore both the reasons this might happen, and how the singers themselves felt about signed song.

This assignment explored the context of Deaf Music (Gfeller and Darrow, 1987; Bossey, 2020; Pereira, 2021; Kyriakou, 2022) and the literature around gesture and singing (Bailey, 2007; Nafisi, 2013;). In addition, I looked at the reasons we respond to imagery, in word and gesture (Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson, 2001; West and Sutton-Spence, 2012; Shewell, 2020).

The subject of my practical research was a qualitative study of the response of my adult and children's choirs and a signed singing group to signed song.

While signed song has a long history in the United Kingdom, particularly in Deaf churches, signed performances are a much more recent phenomenon (Pereira, 2021; Glastonbury Festivals, 2025). There is very little research in this field. I believe this is a significant gap in the literature, and that research may broaden our perception of music, the way it is expressed and the way we experience it. A clearer understanding of Deaf music and signed song will improve the quality of my teaching.

My intended learning outcomes for this assignment were

- to ascertain the response of my singers to signed song,
- to plan future use of signed song through group action research,
- to improve my teaching of signed song and presentation to audiences,
- to reflect critically on what I have learnt in my role as a practitioner researcher.

Literature Review

Searching for literature on signed song and music therapy for the deaf returned few relevant articles, rendering exclusion unnecessary. For information on the effects of movement and gesture I began with a literature review (Kilpatrick, 2020) and found many relevant articles referenced there. In understanding the neuroscience behind gesture and imagery, Shewell's article (2020) on poetic voice and imagery led me to search using the terms imagery and neural response.

While we might assume that hearing is a prerequisite for enjoying music, music reaches many other senses. Music is felt, both as physical vibrations and as emotional experience, by Deaf people as well as those who hear normally (Darrow, 1985; Darrow, 2006; Bang, 2009; Fulford, Ginsborg and Goldbart, 2011; Gfeller, 2016, The Essay: A Different Way to Listen, with Paul Whittaker OBE, 2024). There are visual aspects to live performance that add to our experience such as the unison of bowing in a string section, or the eye contact between conductor and musicians (Fulford, Ginsborg and Goldbart, 2011).

As the charity Attitude Is Everything (no date) points out, disability is a protected characteristic in the United Kingdom. Many cultural organisations are looking at ways to make their offerings accessible (Bossey, 2020). Glastonbury has offered signed performances since 2009, and other festivals such as Download offer interpreters, while signed classical performances in the UK are still extremely rare (Glastonbury Festivals, 2025; Download, no date). Deaf and hearing audiences report a strong positive response to signed song (Dee-sign Choir, no date; Making Music, 2017; Pereira, 2021; Lim, 2022, The Essay: A Different Way to Listen, with Paul Whittaker OBE, 2024). Lim (2022) describes the growth of sign language use in musical theatre, and the artistry required to amalgamate music, story and character into the signed translation, while also expressing the unique perspective of the Deaf community. Murray's short video (2024) describes the success of a joint Glee club between two primary schools, one a special needs school using Makaton, where the children shared their knowledge of Makaton signs and made them part of their performance. (Makaton (2025) is not a language, but a communication system developed for communities such as those with learning disabilities, using some BSL signs alongside English.) While a fully signed concert might be beyond my community choir, we can help signpost the expression and joy of BSL, and lead people to a more inclusive view of music.

There is some research around music for the Deaf as used in music therapy (Darrow, 1985; Gfeller, 2016; Kyriakou, 2022), and increasingly in terms of making music accessible to those with hearing loss (Bossey, 2020; Pereira, 2021; Lim, 2022). While music therapy plays an important role in helping develop language skills and vocabulary, music is an intrinsically valuable and enriching activity (Kyriakou, 2022). Kyriakou (2022) describes using involvement, experience and movement in Deaf music-making, making music as visual as possible and learning with humour and encouragement. This resonates with the holistic approach of learning through singing and play-based experience encouraged by Kodaly (Váradi, 2022), as I have learnt through my NYCOS training. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra (2025) runs a program bringing orchestral music to Deaf children, enriching the experience of the musicians as well as the Deaf. Interestingly, what professional Deaf musicians have in common is access to music as children (Fulford,

Ginsborg and Goldbart, 2011). This evidence points towards the importance of bringing music to the Deaf community, particularly children, and suggests we might approach music in a way that appreciates more than its physical sound.

There are ethical considerations when working with people with hearing loss, and it is important to consult them when designing projects or programs (Gfeller, 2016; Kyriakou, 2022). Good BSL translations use Deaf-oriented vocabulary, for instance replacing “say” with “sign” (Pereira, 2021; Lim, 2022). West and Sutton-Spence (2012) allude to the way a Deaf child in a mainstream school will sign differently to children taught by Deaf mentors. As a hearing person, I need to be aware of my limitations compared to a Deaf BSL user. The translations taught to my groups and discussed in this study are those of Paul Whittaker, a professional Deaf musician, so I am confident they are good BSL translations.

I believe my choir sings better while signing. Conducting that marries gesture, facial expression and musical experience will improve a choir’s performance (Durrant; 2009; Martins and Santos Junior, 2016). Kilpatrick (2020) noted that singers mirror both the good and bad habits of the conductor. If signed song has improved my body language as a conductor, this may have had a positive effect on the choirs’ singing.

Kilpatrick’s literature review (2020) explores synergies between movement and singing, and the ways dance and physical movement express musical ideas, much as well-constructed signed song does. The positive effect of singing with gesture has been studied in different contexts (Bailey, 2007; Nafisi, 2013; Liao and Davidson; 2016). This led me to believe that I could influence the choir’s singing by leading the choir through signing, and having them sign with me, so long as the musical characteristics of the piece were embedded in the translation.

The role of gesture and body language in poetic voice is a rich vein of research. Shewell (2020) discusses our neurological response to poetic imagery. Our brains respond to a metaphoric action as though we were performing that action (Shewell, 2020). There are strong correlations between the parts of the brain which process an external sound, action or image, and those which reconstruct that image (Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson, 2001). Similar effects occur we perceive something and when we imagine it (Mukamel et al., 2010). Minafra (2019) describes a reduction in anxiety and an increase in concentration and communication of the music, when participants rehearsed the piece mentally beforehand. I believe that signed song reinforces the imagery in song, by representing this correlation of thought and action physically.

Gestures are a distinct part of BSL as well as spoken language (Kendon, 1997; Goldin-Meadow and Brentari, 2017). They add context, clarify, help with turn-taking and may presage a cognitive learning step (Goldin-Meadow and Brentari, 2017). Gestures vary with individuals but have common characteristics within a language, which can assist and indicate progress in second language acquisition (Gulberg, 2006; Weisberg et al., 2020). Many terms in gesture studies will be familiar to musicians, for example beats are

gestures that accompany stressed syllables (McCafferty, 2006). Like singing (Mora, 200) gestures can assist in language acquisition, both in comprehension and expression (Gullberg, 2006).

Levitin (2024) describes the way making music involves our brain as follows (2024, p. 19): “we are engaging more mental faculties than during almost any other activity: motor systems, motor planning, imagining, sensory feedback, coordination, emotions, auditory processing and – if we’re inspired – creativity, spirituality, pro-social feelings, and possibly a state of heightened awareness coupled with calm known as the *flow state*”. This reinforces the idea that hearing is only a part of our experience of music. The “flow state” of musicians (Levitin, 2024, p.90) occurs when they are deeply immersed in the music, effortlessly in control and at ease. It seems to me the mental process of signing is similarly immersive. These correlations (Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson, 2001; Mukamel et al., 2010; Levitin, 2024) may explain why we respond so viscerally to signed song.

In short, signed song should lead us to a deeper understanding of our response to music (Kyriakou, 2022), help us connect with audiences (Dee-sign Choir, no date; Making Music, 2017; Pereira, 2021; Lim, 2022, The Essay: A Different Way to Listen, with Paul Whittaker OBE, 2024) and broaden our understanding of BSL as a language (Gullberg, 2006; Goldin-Meadow and Brentari, 2017), in addition to making choral performance more inclusive (Bossey, 2020; Pereira, 2021; Lim, 2022).

Methodology and Methods

I chose a pragmatic approach to this project, wanting to combine current research with the subjective experience of my participants to improve my teaching (Pretorius, 2024). I chose to follow a participatory group action approach (Bradbury and Reason, 2003; Mabetha et al., 2023) in alignment with this paradigm. Bradbury and Reason (2003) describe participatory group action research as a collaborative, iterative process where stakeholders at every level of a project provide feedback on the current situation being addressed and work together to plan action for the best possible outcome for all involved. Having introduced my choirs to signed song, I wanted them to have a voice in its future use. This also dictated my choice of a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to my research.

Mabetha et al. (2023) described using participatory action research to optimise primary healthcare in a rural community. The focus groups in their study used an iterative process to make effective changes supported by all involved. Guiding principles for Mabetha et al. (2023) included creating a safe psychological space, encouraging respectful listening, avoiding blame and appreciating everyone's contribution. By encouraging free discussion and a comfortable atmosphere of mutual respect I hoped to create a similar safe space for my focus groups, which I believe is reflected in the transcripts.

Hall, Williams and Daniel (2010) used a mix of focus groups of different ages and experience to gain a balanced picture of their afterschool care program. I held separate focus groups for each choir to facilitate comparison between my adult choir, children's choir and the signing club, the latter created specifically to learn signed song. The aim was to reflect on their experience of signed song, and to discuss its future use (Colucci, 2007; Hall, Williams and Daniel, 2010; Khuwaja et al., 2019).

I used initial questionnaires to gain a broad response and frame the focus group discussions. As shown in Table 1, I had little response from the younger groups, so I used the adult group responses to develop initial themes for all three focus groups. For my adult focus group, I created mind-maps using participants' words and phrases from the questionnaires for each theme. We spent roughly ten minutes discussing each theme, using the mind-maps as starting points. For the two younger groups, I used blank mind-maps which we filled in together, again using their own words, and spent five minutes on each theme.

	Adult Community Choir	Children's Choir (Primary)	Signed Song Club (Primary)
Exposure to signed song	• Two workshops with Paul Whittaker • Performing songs from the workshops in concerts	• Games involving signs • Learning and performing signed songs	• New club, only 5 sessions before focus group • Recruited specifically to learn BSL songs
Songs learnt with BSL	• Follow the heron • Let it be • Three Little Birds	• Three Little Birds • I once saw an elephant • Rainbow Connection	• Three Little Birds • Let it be • Follow the heron • Moon River • Rainbow Connection
Questionnaire	14 responses	4 responses	0 responses
Focus Group	8 participants	1 participant	3 participants

Table 1: Groups from which focus groups were drawn

Because I wanted to create a high level of engagement, I looked for examples of focus groups that incorporated activities which would engage participants from the outset, particularly for my younger groups. Colucci (2007) and Khuwaja et al. (2019) used activities around a set of focus-group questions to engage young people on sensitive topics, including list generation, role-playing, storytelling and picture-sorting. The authors suggest this approach may create space for deeper and more honest answers. I used a word-collecting exercise, collecting BSL vocabulary learnt from our songs, to start my children's focus groups and initiate discussion (see Figure 2).

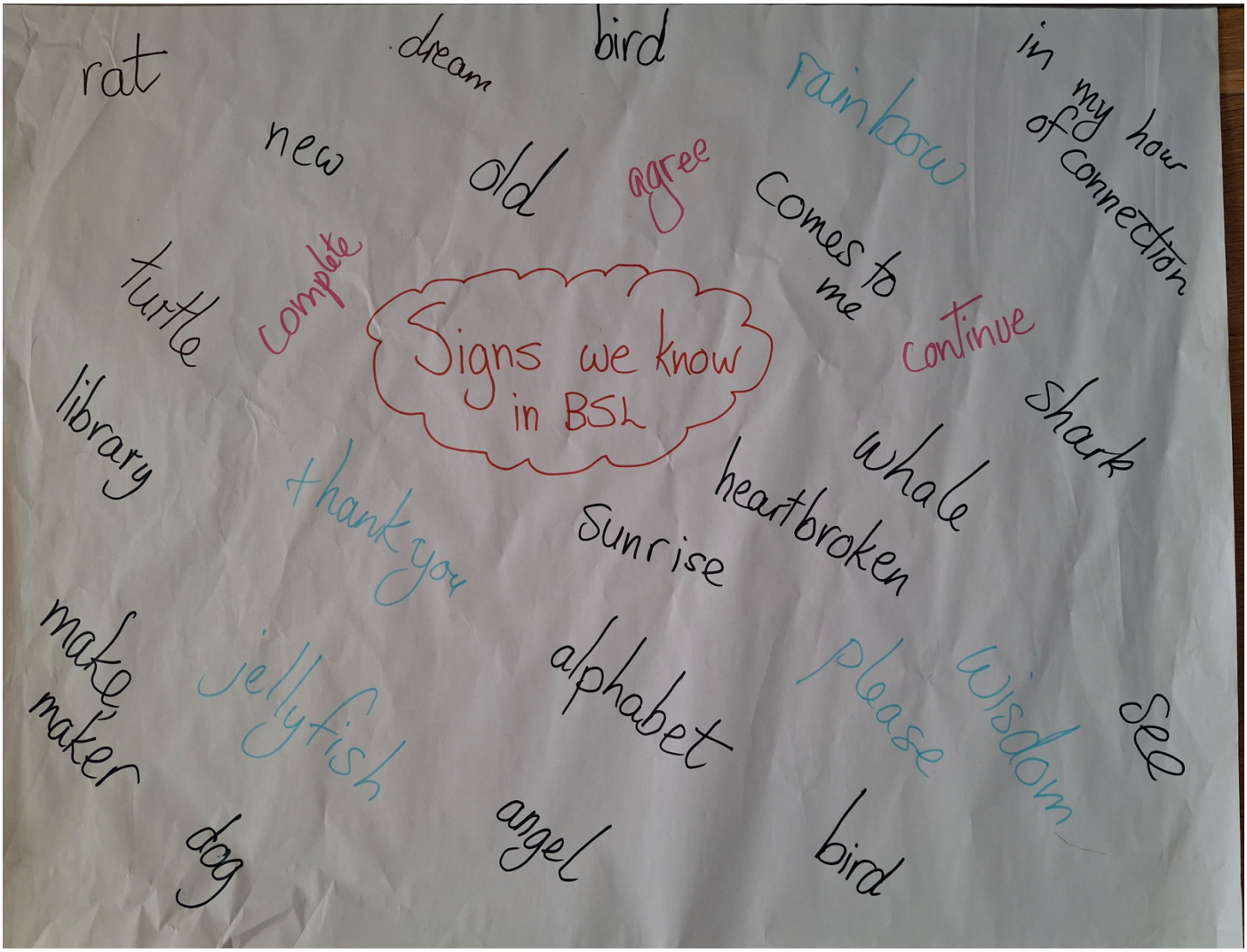


Figure 2: Word-collecting flipchart sheet from signing club focus group

All focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed with names redacted (Appendix 7). Biscuits and drinks were provided to encourage a relaxed atmosphere. Bradbury (2015) stressed the importance of agreed goals in Group Action Research, and using the participants' words to create mind-maps facilitated this.

I used a reflexive thematic analysis approach, using coding themes that told the story of the project and illustrated the narrative (Braun, Clarke and Hayfield, 2022). Taguette software was used as a coding tool (Appendix 8). Braun, Clarke and Hayfield (2022) emphasised the importance of reflection and ongoing learning for a practitioner researcher, who should keep thinking about the process as well as the subject of research and understand that all thematic analysis involves subjective interpretation. My understanding of their approach is that there should be an ongoing dialogue between our assumptions and expectations and the data we collect. To achieve this I kept a reflective journal as a tool to think about the way I work as well as the trajectory of my understanding of my topic.

Going back to the ideas of participatory group theory (Mabetha et al., 2023), this ongoing conversation between my initial assumptions and the data echoes the process of revisiting a project in successive iterations, informed by what has been learnt so far. Braun, Clarke and Hayfield (2022) mention that there is

no definitive endpoint to reflexive thematic analysis, but that our conclusions are refined during the process to a point that is the best that can be achieved at that moment.

Prior to starting this research, I obtained ethical approval from the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD), attached as Appendix 10, a letter of self-permission (Appendix 11) and clearance to work with young people from Disclosure Scotland (Appendix 12). Consent forms from all participants and parents of child participants with names redacted can be found in Appendix 9.

An ethical consideration with this practitioner research was to acknowledge and mitigate my own bias. I have found signed song has revolutionised my own singing and conducting and am a keen advocate for its benefits. While my singers are aware I have a passion for signed song, I wanted to make sure they felt free to voice their reservations and criticisms. The steps I took to achieve this were to ask directly what challenges and limitations of signed song they had noticed, and to use the participants' own words as far as possible, using in vivo thematic analysis (Haskins Lisle, Merenda and Gabbard, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

This project produced insights into the way my choirs respond to signed singing. It highlighted the level of challenge involved, particularly when singers are asked to sing as well as perform a BSL translation. Generally, participants reported that meeting the challenge was fun and resulted in a sense of achievement. They found that signing contributed to the delivery of the text. This is the result I expected based on my understanding of our strong neural response to actions we observe and to poetic imagery Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson, 2001; Mukamel et al., 2010; Shewell, 2020).

The adult choir questionnaire responses are provided in the Appendix 1, the children's choir questionnaire responses collected in Appendix 2, the prepared flipchart sheets used for the adult focus groups in Appendix 3, the flipchart sheets from the adult focus group in Appendix 4, the mind-map-style sheets from the children's choir in Appendix 5 and for the signing club focus group in Appendix 6.

The full transcript of the three focus groups is included in Appendix 7. All participants are anonymised as follows: I am referred to as "R", the researcher, the adults are as Adults 1 to 7, the children's choir member is Child 1, and the Signing Club members are Child A, Child B and Child C.

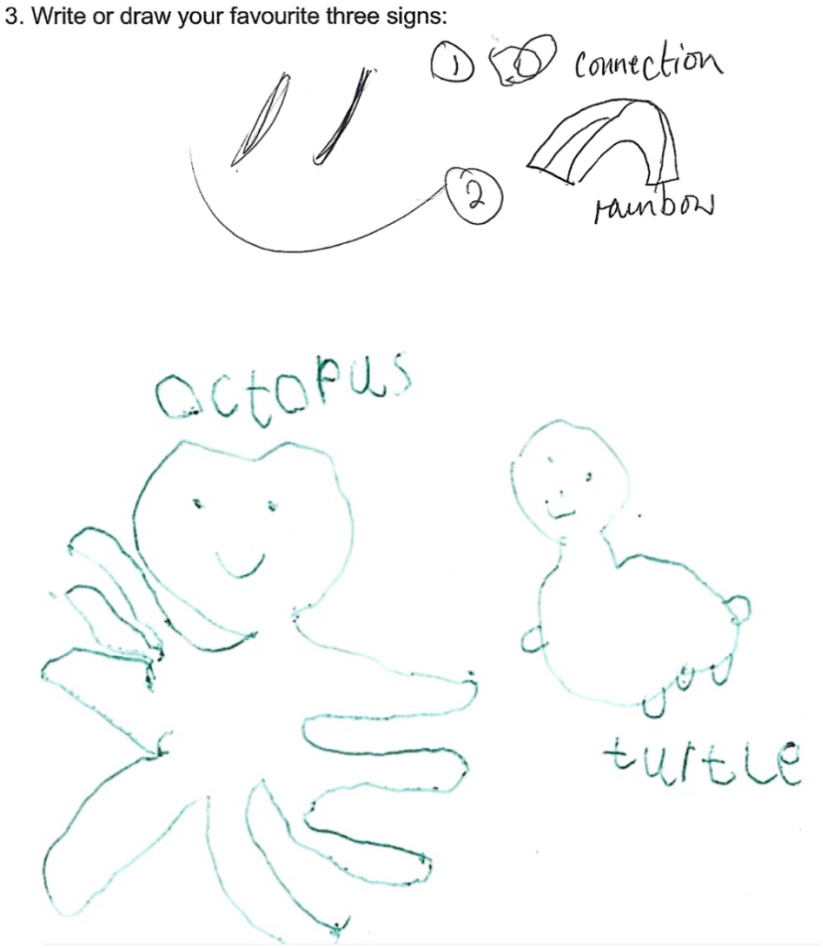


Figure 3: Responses from children's choir questionnaire

The children's choir and signing club questionnaires and focus groups saw disappointingly low numbers of respondents. The children had less to say on how we should continue to use signed song, but those who

participated agreed with the adult groups on the difficulty of signing and singing, for example Child 1 said, “It’s easier to do it without signing the signs” and Child B said, “it’s quite hard”. However, all those who participated commented that it was “fun” and mentioned the sense of achievement they felt. When asked if they wanted to continue, the answer was simply “yes”. As Child A said, “all I know is I really enjoy doing it.”

The initial themes developed from the adult questionnaires (Table 2) were expanded into mind-maps using the words of participants.

Initial themes based on questionnaire responses for adult group
How does signing make us feel? Benefits
How does signing make us feel? Costs and challenges
Does signing affect our understanding of the words?
What does good signing look like?
What actions can we take?

Table 2: Mind-map themes drawn from questionnaire responses

The questions asked by participants about the point of signed song led me to refine my final themes as shown in Figure 4.

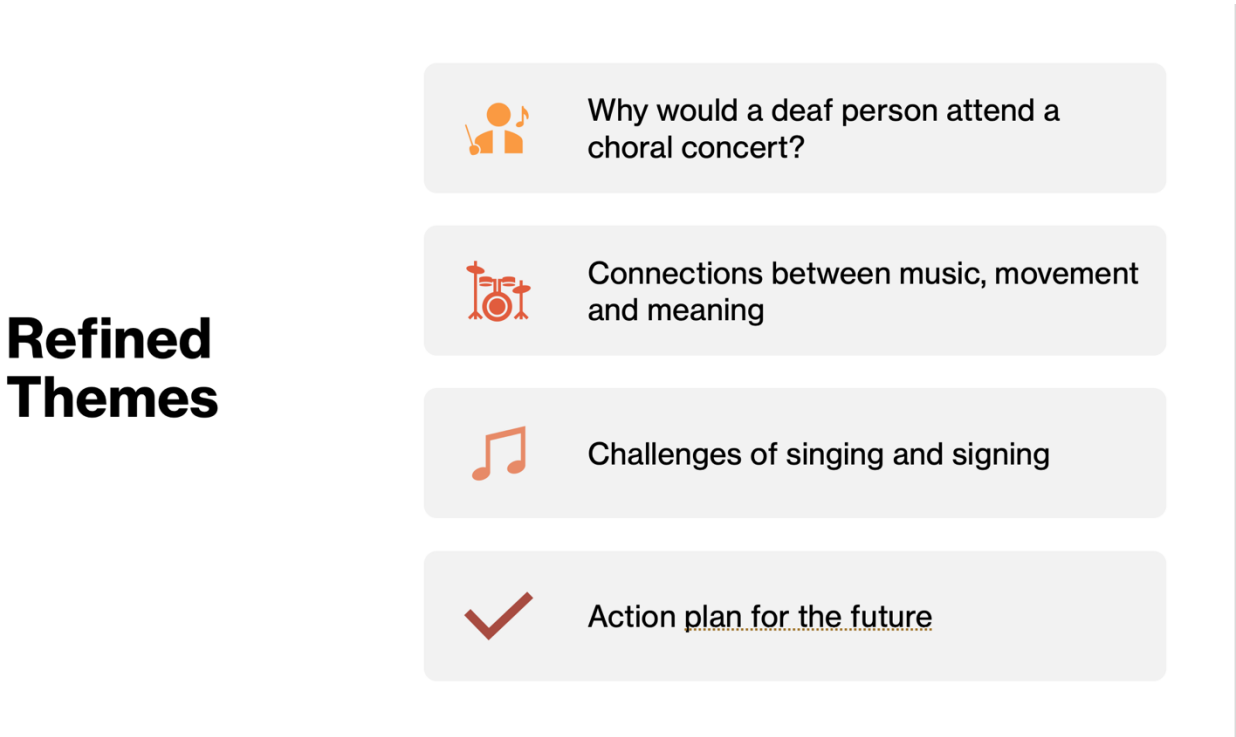


Figure 4: Refined themes developed by coding transcripts of focus groups

I used these in my reflective thematic analysis, following the ideas of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Why would a deaf person attend a choral concert?

This was a question raised by Adult 5 and Adult 6 in the adult focus group. As Adult 5 put it, they “couldn’t quite understand why somebody who’s profoundly deaf would pay fifty pounds to go to the Usher Hall to see a Mozart concert”. My literature search on Deaf music broadened my perspective on how we perceive

music, both emotionally and through our other senses. As Adult 1 said, Deaf people “can experience music with five senses, they can experience music in different ways, through vibrations in a vague way. So, if you have someone signing to enhance that, then that increases their understanding of what’s being performed, and their enjoyment”.

Inclusion is a central reason a Deaf person would attend a concert. Adult 6 described the work of a blind friend who arranges blind travel tours, for people who want to see the world, but can’t see: “I might want to go to the Taj Mahal, and even though I can’t see it, I might want somebody to stand next to me while I’m there, and kind of smell it, and hear it, and somebody describe it to me”. In a similar way, a Deaf person will experience being part of a live event, sharing the emotions and excitement, although they hear it differently. As Attitude is Everything (no date) point out, people with a disability are protected by law – classical music makers have a responsibility to improve their experience of classical music.

Exposure to BSL as a rich and expressive language has benefited the participants as well. They are developing a new skill, as Child A said. The phrase “sense of achievement” came up repeatedly. The children were “proud” to have learnt something. As Child C said, “the first thing that goes through my head when I finish is the new signs I like” and Child B mentioned asking her parents to guess the meanings of new signs she had learned. It is possible to pick up a lot of vocabulary through just a few songs, as the word-collecting exercise with the signing club reveals (Figure 2). As Child 1 said when asked why she liked signing, “I don’t know! I just like it!”

Connections between music, movement and meaning

The literature review suggested that there is a strong correlation between the areas of the brain processing perception, imagery and action (Kosslyn, Ganis and Thompson, 2001; Shewell, 2020; Levitin, 2024). The idea of signing reinforcing our understanding was reflected in responses:

- “I feel like I’m telling the story” – Adult 2
- “When you understand what the signing means, it helps you, it reminds you about the words as well” – Adult 4
- “It extends the level of connection” and “The words and the signing, the movement, they reinforce each other” – Adult 3
- “It helps you understand the words” – Adult 6
- “There’s a lot goes through your brain” – Child A

This ties in with the research finding that gesture is closely associated with developing confidence in acquiring a new language (Gulberg, 2006; Weisberg et al., 2020).

There is a visual aspect to a performance even without a BSL interpreter. Adult 4 highlighted the way the conductor can affect audience perception, “you’re using non-verbal signs to us and people can see that from behind, it’s always very interesting at a classical concert to see that”. We can see the cues a conductor gives the performers, and that helps us see where something is about to happen. Whittaker

(2024) described how he signs different parts or voices in different positions in space, directing our focus of attention. The appearance of a choir will also affect our perception. Adult 2 noted, “if you go see a choir that’s very formal and don’t move, how you get a different experience from a choir that is moving around and maybe dressed in different colours” and Adult 6 said you will always notice one “grumpy” face. In my reflective journal, I suggested that I am more relaxed and immersed in the music when I conduct by signing, which should result in the choir responding likewise (Durrant; 2009; Martins and Santos Junior, 2016; Kilpatrick, 2020).

As with conducting (Durrant; 2009; Martins and Santos Junior, 2016. Kilpatrick, 2020), communication is most successful when facial expression and body language match the sign or gesture. The questionnaire responses echoed this:

- “facial expression and body language was also important”
- “incredible ability to communicate the essence of the music with every single part of his body”. In the focus group, Adult 3 noted that “I’ve never come across anyone so communicative in my life, even his little pinky was telling me something! Just his facial expressions - his body language was just phenomenal”.
- “The signs stopped being arbitrary hand waving and started to make sense. And I could begin to see expression within the signing. Pre internet I was intrigued to hear about signed poetry. Paul would make a good job of that.”
- “he didn’t sign every word which makes sense for the audience:

Adults 6 and 12 both pointed out that having to perform without music improved the performance as “you’re communicating with your face”. Signed singing increased the choir’s awareness of the physicality of singing, Adult 4 noting that signing “feels like a dance” and Adult 3 said “it’s a whole new layer of communication from the body”.

A BSL interpretation should enhance the experience of a Deaf person by expressing the music itself, not just the meaning of the lyrics. Adult 4 noted that “the guy who’s doing the translation for signing is also translating the music”. Adult 5 said the signing “accentuated the music”. This corroborates the links between music and movement in the literature (Bailey, 2007; Nafisi, 2013; Liao and Davidson; 2016; Kilpatrick, 2020). if the BSL translation includes elements of musical language and expression, it will enhance the experience for the whole audience. As Adult 1 said, “you’ve included everyone in the room, especially those for whom hearing is a difficulty for them”.

Challenges of singing and signing

Most signing choirs sign without singing, using a recorded track. All three groups agreed that it is “tricky” and “difficult” to sign and sing. For all the children who responded, and most adults, this corresponded to the same “sense of achievement”, “exhilaration” and “relief” after singing and signing a song, but some older adults found it too much to memorise. A study in those over eighty (Rojas, Riffo and Guerra, 2022)

supports the idea that we have slower, less accurate recall when cognitive load is high in this age group. Other participants found the coordination challenging. Adult 6 said, “I have to really concentrate on making my body do what it needs to do.” This is not necessarily age-dependent; as Child B remarked, “it’s quite hard”.

An issue mentioned by Adult 7 was that it was time-consuming to learn the signs as well as the music, and this may have reduced the time spent singing. While I feel the benefits mitigated the time spent, this is a valid perspective for someone just wanting to sing.

Another area of challenge was audience perception. Some members reported audiences finding the signs confusing, especially if different sections were signing at different times, in line with the underlay for their part. In a community choir class, the adjudicator felt our “actions” hadn’t really worked, though she enjoyed our delivery of the song. I reflected afterwards that she hadn’t realised the “actions” were sign language. We agreed that it was important to “orientate the audience” as to what we were doing. We also discussed choosing less complex material, so that everyone is signing in unison, or with clearly demarcated parts.

Action Plan for the Future

As a piece of group action research, the focus groups successfully developed a plan for future action.

My initial impetus to explore signed song was to make music more inclusive. The more I understand how Deaf people interact with music (Darrow, 1985; Bang, 2009; Fulford, Ginsborg and Goldbart, 2011; Gfeller, 2016, The Essay: A Different Way to Listen, with Paul Whittaker OBE, 2024), the more I can see how important it is to give Deaf people proper access to musical experiences, particularly in education settings.

While my singers are largely enthusiastic about signed singing and prepared to keep BSL as one of the languages we regularly perform, they do not see a role for our choir in connecting directly with the BSL community. As Adult 6 noted, we do not have a local signing community. The choir was created as a singing choir, and that will continue to be our primary focus. It is also important to the choir that members be given the option not to sign if it is a source of stress or might make them consider leaving the group.

In my children’s groups I will continue to learn and teach signed songs as much as possible, in the knowledge they will learn more about music as well as BSL. I plan to attend BSL training to make sure I am passing on good signing habits to the children, and to gain a better understanding of Deaf culture.

The focus group process has also clarified important characteristics for our future BSL song choices:

- Avoid complexity, for example where parts sing different words at the same time
- Choose good translations where the signs amplify the text and the music
- Allow time to learn the song and the signs separately
- Provide videos for practise

- Choir should receive feedback for their signing as well as their singing

We implemented two suggestions in our next concert. We included a fuller explanation of our signing during the concert, including the way the signs illuminate the text. We taught the audience to sign the chorus of one song. We then gave our audience the opportunity to comment on the use of sign language by adding to a flipchart sheet, as shown in Figure 5.

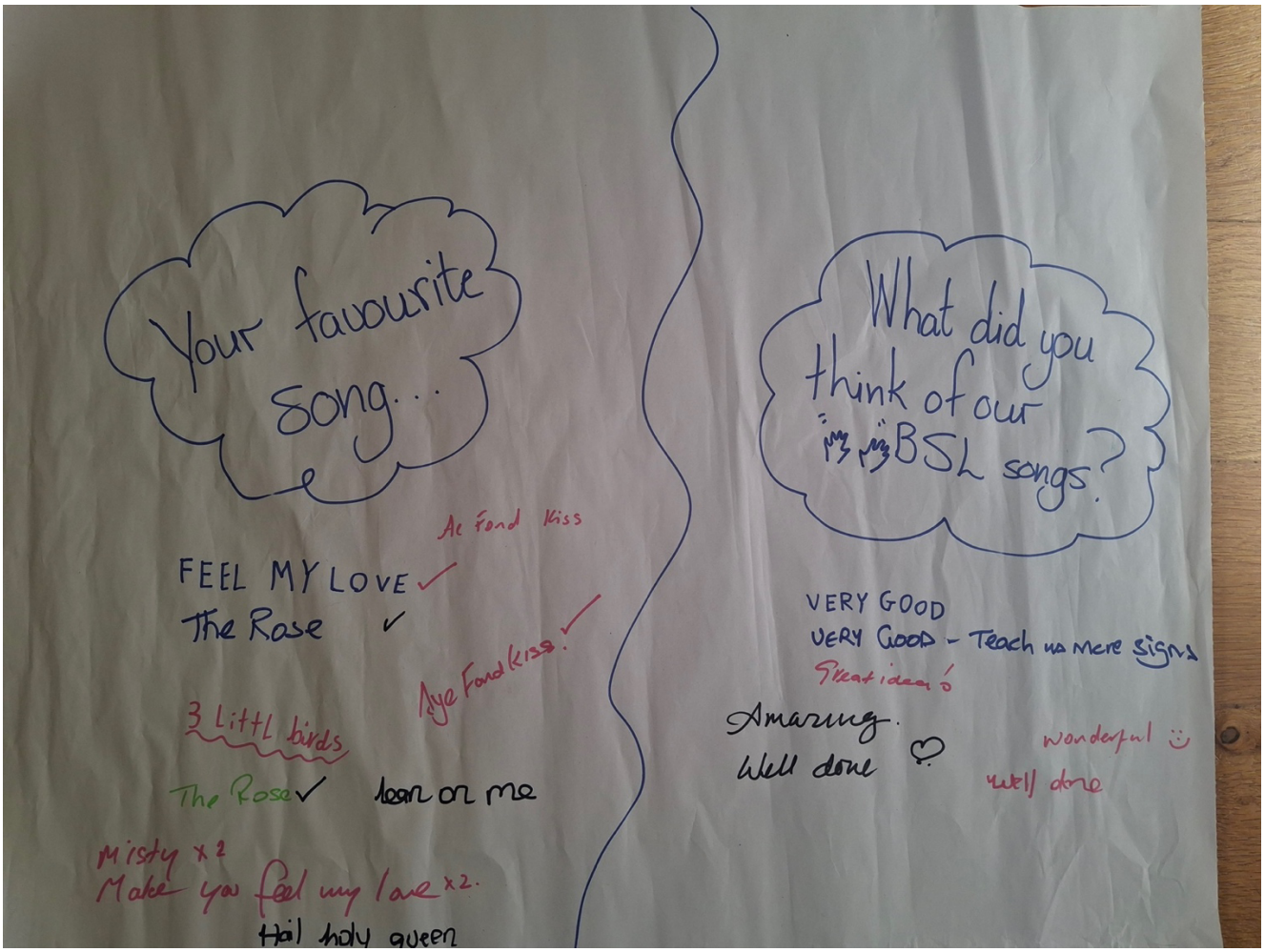


Figure 5: Audience feedback from a recent concert by the adult choir

I was struck by the impact of introducing Deaf children to music. Music provision in the UK is patchy even for hearing children. The kinds of teaching provided by Deaf music therapists and teachers (Darrow, 1985; Bang, 2009; Gfeller, 2016) and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (2025) can have a disproportionately positive effect and would benefit hearing children too. As music educators, we should be applying pressure to those who set curricula to make access to music a priority. Without making the tools of music accessible to our children, we will struggle to meet the needs of disabled audiences in future.

Reflections

My personal learning outcomes for this project were:

1. Plan and implement this project in an achievable and timely way
2. Establish a deeper picture of how my choirs respond to signed song
3. Plan to improve the way I teach signed song
4. Improve audience interaction using signed song

The project was completed on time and to plan. The children's focus groups had low numbers, and in future I would structure these as part of a regular session rather than as a separate activity.

I particularly enjoyed planning, holding and analysing focus groups with my singers. My adult choir has a strong ethos of community, mutual support and being a choir for its singers, rather than singers for the choir. However, the reality of regular rehearsals is that there is not time for in-depth discussion. It was a privilege to spend time listening to the members of the choir and getting to know them better. Reflecting on the process has encouraged me to work harder at bringing the choir into discussion on the directions we choose.

The process of analysing the transcripts was an opportunity to see where I have led the direction of discussion, even when it was my intention chiefly to listen. I was most aware of this with the focus group with the single child from my youngest children's group. However, reading back, my interventions were to bring the conversation back to the topic, and the child in question knew her mind and expressed herself fluently.

Reflecting on my role as a practitioner researcher, it was challenging to stick to a facilitating role in a group where I am usually in charge. There are instances where I missed a line of thought in the adult focus group. I was asked what I thought various times. There was a point a participant I made about the time spent learning the signs taking away time from learning songs. Looking back at the transcript, I could have opened this point out to the group and explored this in more depth. In future research, I will be more aware of opportunities to open new lines of inquiry.

The project gave me a deeper understanding of the choirs' response to signed song. There was a lot of enthusiasm and support for signed song, and a clearer picture emerged of the challenges presented. This resulted in a plan that met my third and fourth learning outcomes, a positive plan for improved use of signed song and better communication to audiences.

A topic that was central to my understanding in this assignment was my perception that the choir's singing improved through using signed song. While the participants were enthusiastic about signed song, the idea that their singing had improved did not emerge as a theme, which disappointed me, though as mentioned the idea emerged to compare recordings of a song, signed and not signed. The idea of the physicality of

singing did come up, and this could have contributed to the improvement I perceived in the choir's sound. My conducting is more relaxed and focused on the meaning of the song, which is another possible factor, as I noted in my reflective journal.

There were some limitations on this study, such as:

- Very small sample size
- Lack of previous research for comparison
- Community/ amateur group only
- No information gathered regarding neurodiversity

It would be useful to assess the impact on a professional or auditioned choir of having a BSL interpreter as part of a performance. Whittaker reports positive feedback from conductors (2024) and it would be interesting to study whether the presence of an interpreter affects the way performers think about the music and its meaning.

I believe neurodivergent people may benefit from signed song, particularly when they struggle with verbal communication. I felt it would be uncomfortable to discuss this in our focus groups, so excluded the topic from this project. This is a subject I feel warrants further investigation.

There are many unanswered questions about signed song and its effect on children. The indications are that using BSL with music would facilitate learning BSL, both for hearing and Deaf children (Mora, 2000; Golinkoff et al., 2015).

Conclusions

Introducing signed song to my choirs has been a positive experience. My choirs have enjoyed their introduction to signed song and gained a sense of achievement from learning to sing and sign successfully in performance. They have gained some insight into BSL as a language and found that performing with sign language has given them a deeper insight into the meaning of songs. My perception is that their singing when signing is more relaxed and more connected to the meaning of the song.

As a piece of participatory group action research, this assignment has given me an opportunity to collaborate with my adult singers in a new way and has help build consensus as to the role of signed song for the future. This is a different path to my original vision, which I see as a success as it means the conclusions reflect the ideas of the whole group. The choir is happy to add BSL to our list of performed languages and continue to perform some signed songs, without compromising their identity as a singing choir. We will explain our signed singing to audiences going forward.

The focus groups with my children's choir and signing club were less successful in terms of joint planning. Very few children joined the focus groups. While this was disappointing, the feedback I did have suggested they enjoy signed song and are very happy to continue. I will look for more avenues to introduce signed singing to young people. It is an ideal way to introduce a new language (Mora, 2000; Golinkoff et al., 2015) and has pedagogical value in terms of musical development (Kyriakou, 2022; Váradi, 2022).

There is scope for research into signed singing in other types of groups, especially for high-level choral groups, where signing is a very recent development.

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Appendix 1: Adult Choir Questionnaire

We have recently performed Three Little Birds by singing and signing in BSL. How did you find the learning process?
I enjoyed learning the sign and felt it helped me with the singing aspect and to better understand the words and meaning
Initially tricky to learn words and signs, but felt that the signing supported me to remember the song lyrics.
Initially not confident, I thought learning to sign at the same time as learning to sing the song was too much. BUT the video Sue supplied helped enormously
Three Little Birds is probably easier than some of the other signed songs but I still find it difficult to sign and sing and remember the signs. I also find that the time taken in rehearsals to learn signs is time taken from learning new music. That being said it has been a good experience to learn some signs and they can help with remembering the words. However I feel we need to limit the number of signed songs we do.
Once the notes were entrenched it was good to add another dimension using signing to help with the words.
Difficult. Signing is not intuitive for me.
Challenging, as I have to work hard on co-ordination of the movement sequences. Also finding consistency in whether or not I should be mirroring your moves or not is tricky for me. However, it is for these reasons that I think trying to sing and sign in BSL is good for me.
I was slow to learn the signing but I still enjoyed it. I think being left handed was a slight problem. This was soon overcome.
Very interesting and quite challenging. I had learned, 25+ years ago Makaton. Afraid of being confused by the two slightly different styles
Difficult! Simultaneously trying to remember words, music and signing definitely stretched my ageing brain! However, I do think the exercise improved our singing.
I enjoyed learning the signs and understanding how BSL works but I find performing the songs difficult. When trying to concentrate on getting the notes right too. I think I have dyspraxia so I find I have to concentrate on movements and don't find it comes naturally.
Fascinating
Difficult initially. Now enjoy signing alongside singing
Singing and signing at the same time is quite a challenge. It's not easy but it's worth the effort. I think we bring more meaning and emotion to our singing as we sign. It also helps

our audiences to connect more with our songs. They often look a bit puzzled to start with then you see them smiling as they get it! Mostly though, I think signing and singing is good fun!

How did you feel after the performance?
I felt happy that we shared sign with others and enjoyed signing with a large group
Didn't perform
I enjoyed it. Signing and singing was fun
I was happy with the performance but some audience comments were that with different parts signing different words it was confusing. I think we need to be more comfortable signing in a performance but I think it is difficult, particularly for older members, to do 2 things at once.
I did enjoy the performance but felt unsure how audience received not everyone signing the same thing. I would be interested to hear from a hearing impaired person if this was confusing. In my experience of working with signing I never signed different things only the main theme being sung.
I am not comfortable singing with actions (can't even clap in time)
Mixed. There is the natural exhilaration on having just done a live performance to an audience, tempered by my awareness of the things that I could have done better.
I felt happy and elated after the performance. I wondered how the audience had reacted. I didn't get any feedback about the signing.
The signing helped remember the words of the song, and took away some of the stress of learning the words. A visual and kinetic aid if you like.
Not sure. Disappointed that the adjudicator at the Fife Festival seemed to miss the point of the signing.
I need to learn how to divide my concentration between the part singing and the signing to fully enjoy performing this way.
Happy
Very happy. Also relieved that I didin't make any signing errors. Feels like you are dancing. Lovely complement to the music
-

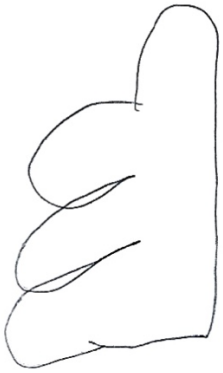
If you attended one or both of our signing workshops with Paul Whittaker, what surprised you or caught your attention?

That signs aren’t always in the same order as the words and i was surprised by how much i enjoyed it!
How signing enhanced the song’s meaning and how fun it was to learn.
I didn't attend those, but found the recording very useful. It helped that I could stop and start it and repeat as needed. The signs stopped being arbitrary hand waving and started to make sense. And I could begin to see expression within the signing. Pre internet I was intrigued to hear about signed poetry. Paul would make a good job of that.
I thoroughly enjoyed Paul's workshops and his energy and enthusiasm were great. He was quite relaxed about signing and didn't sign all the words but tried to tell the story. Signing was only part- facial expression and body language was also important.
I really enjoyed his enthusiasm for signing and didn’t realise he didn’t sign every word which makes sense for the audience.
Did not attend
His incredible ability to communicate the essence of the music with every single part of his body.
I was at the initial signing workshop. It was the best fun I've had at choir due to Paul's exuberant and upbeat teaching.
fun element. All learning something new together.
Paul’s gift of teaching us with such great enthusiasm and humour. Signing heightened our awareness of the meaning of the words.
I really enjoyed the workshop with Paul. I found his enthusiasm very infectious. I liked how he explained how BSL works.
n/a
n/a
I missed last year' workshop with Paul so I hope I will be at the next one if he has time to give us another one.

Appendix 2: Children's Choir Questionnaires

Understanding Signed Song

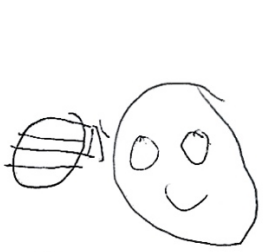
1. We have learnt some signed songs together, such as Three Little Birds. How did you find learning songs with signs? Write or draw your answer:



2. How did you feel singing and signing these songs?

Happy

3. Write or draw your favourite three signs:

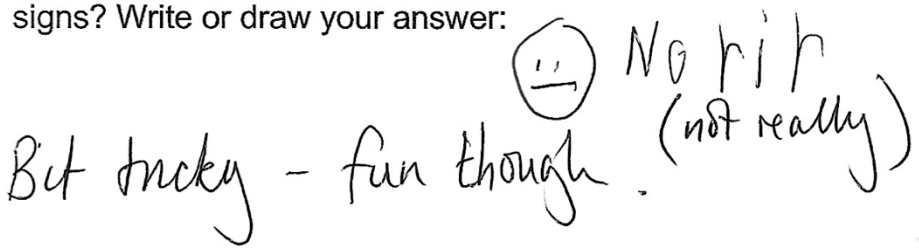


Connection

tiny

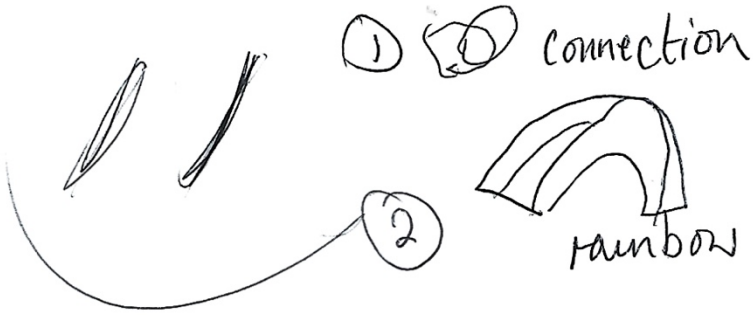
Understanding Signed Song

1. We have learnt some signed songs together, such as Three Little Birds. How did you find learning songs with signs? Write or draw your answer:



2. How did you feel singing and signing these songs?

3. Write or draw your favourite three signs:



Understanding Signed Song

1. We have learnt some signed songs together, such as Three Little Birds. How did you find learning songs with signs? Write or draw your answer:

It was a bit more difficult learning the Signs but it was fun!

2. How did you feel singing and signing these songs?

I felt very happy to know that everyone could understand us,

3. Write or draw your favourite three signs:

1. Half asleep
1. Rainbow
2. Conection

Understanding Signed Song

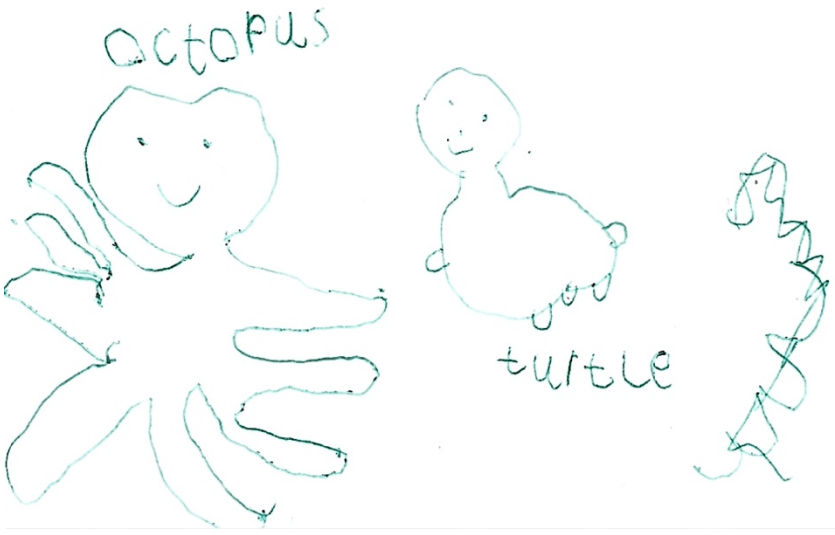
1. We have learnt some signed songs together, such as Three Little Birds. How did you find learning songs with signs? Write or draw your answer:

It was ok, but I found learning signs and singing at the same time hard.

2. How did you feel singing and signing these songs?

I felt good but also nervous at concerts

3. Write or draw your favourite three signs:



Appendix 3: Mind-maps for Adult Choir Focus Group

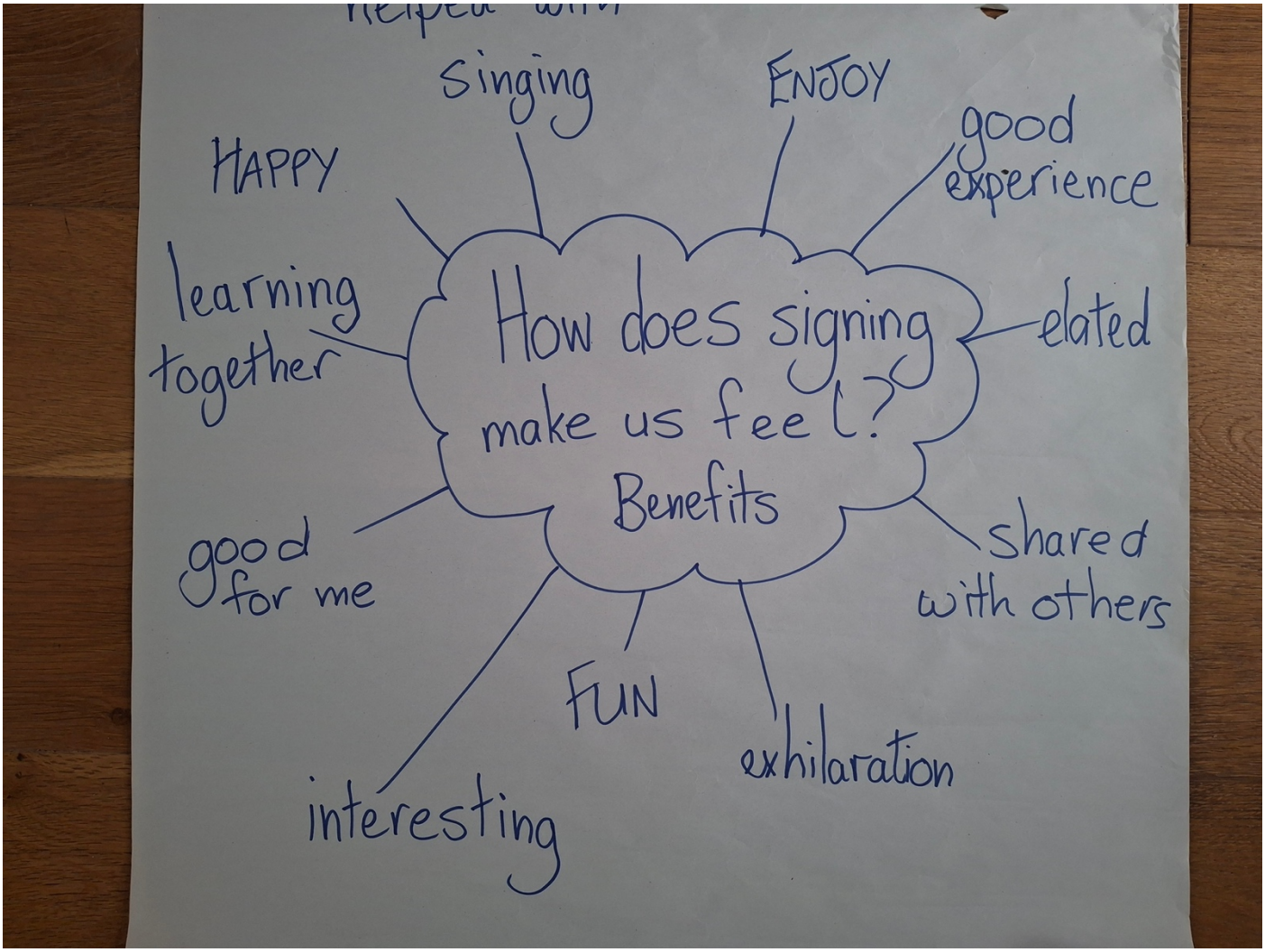


Figure 6: Mind-map - How does signing make us feel? Benefits

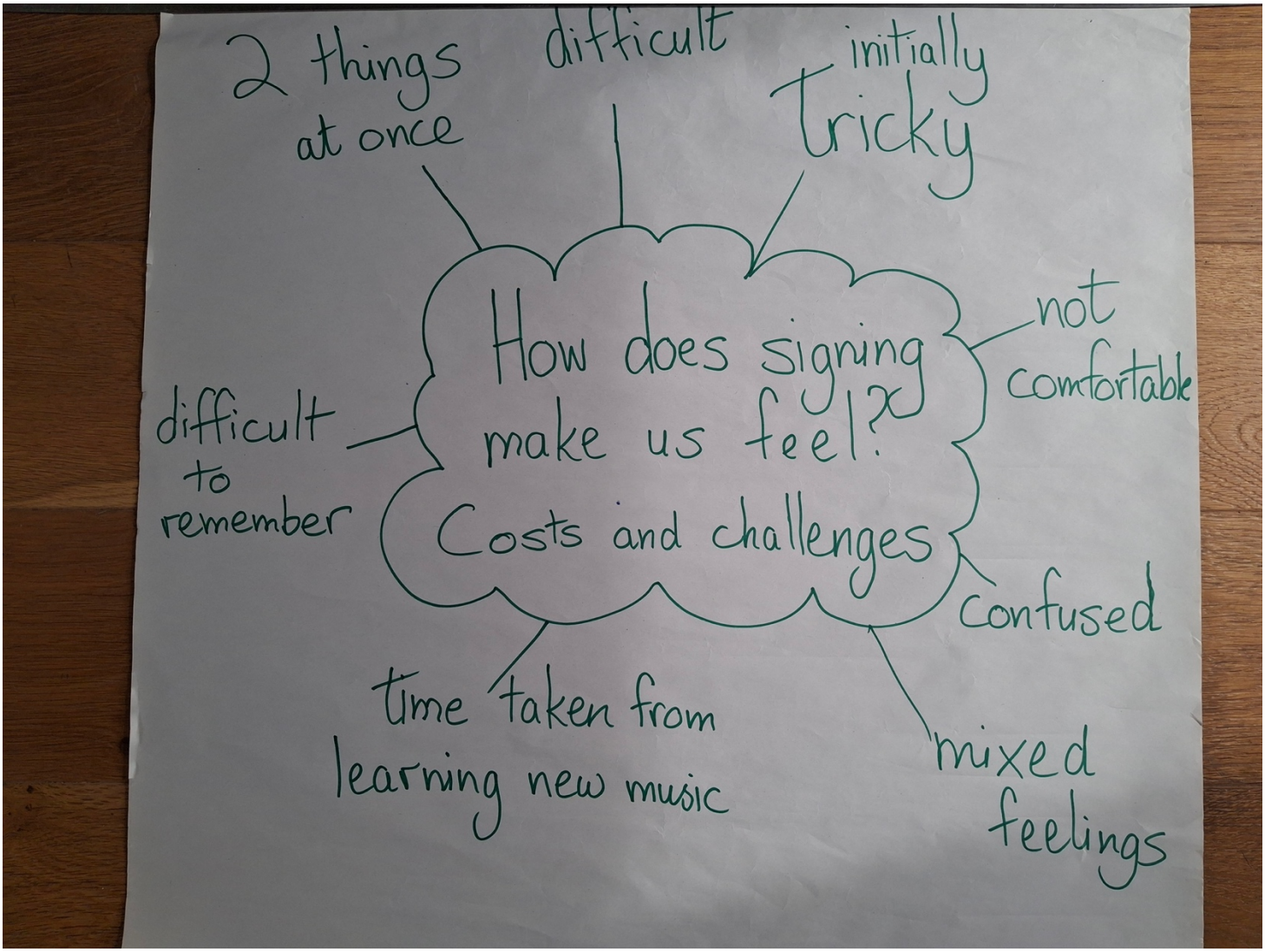


Figure 7: Mind-map - How does signing make us feel? Costs and challenges

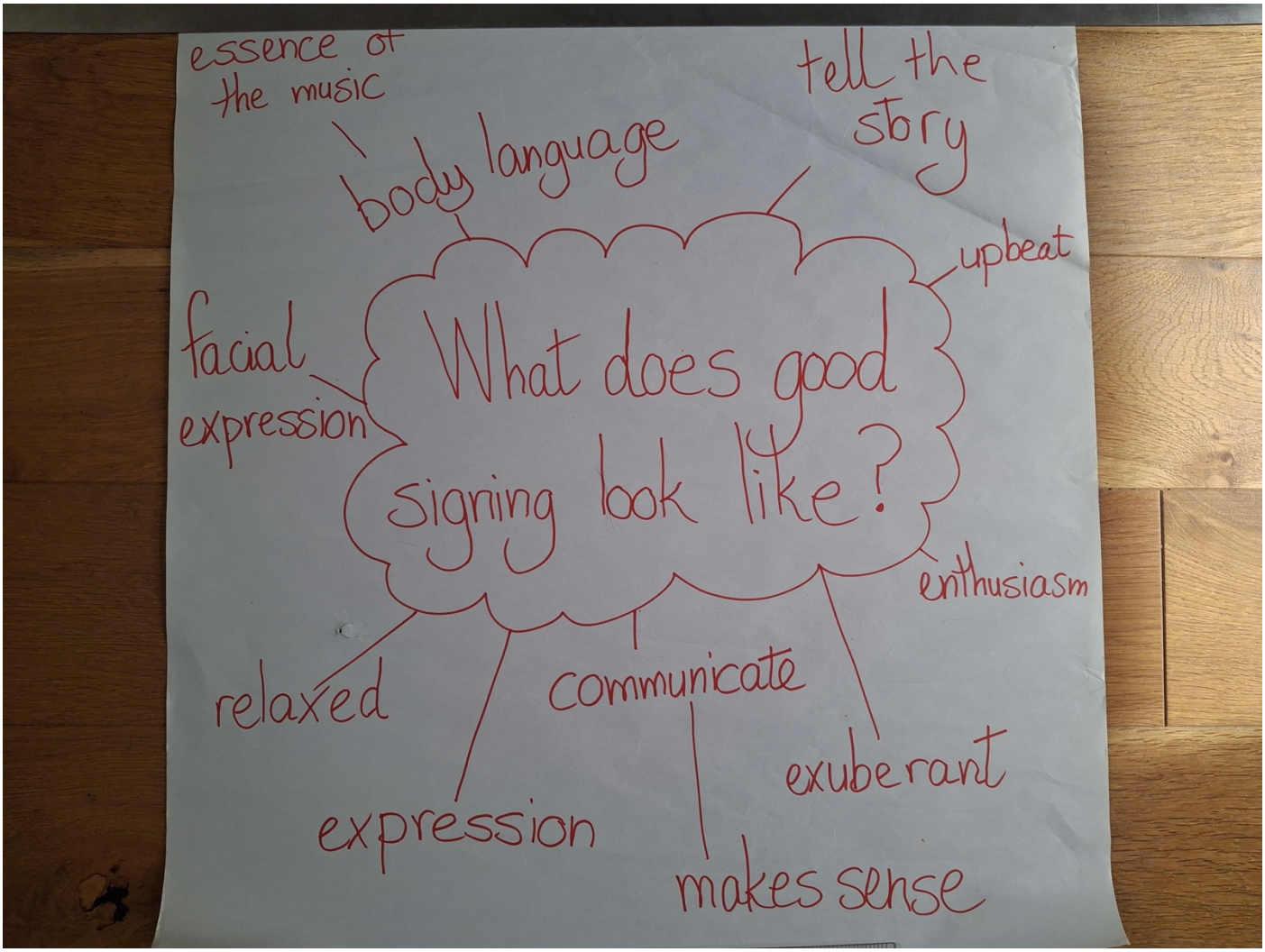


Figure 8: Mind-map - What does good signing look like?

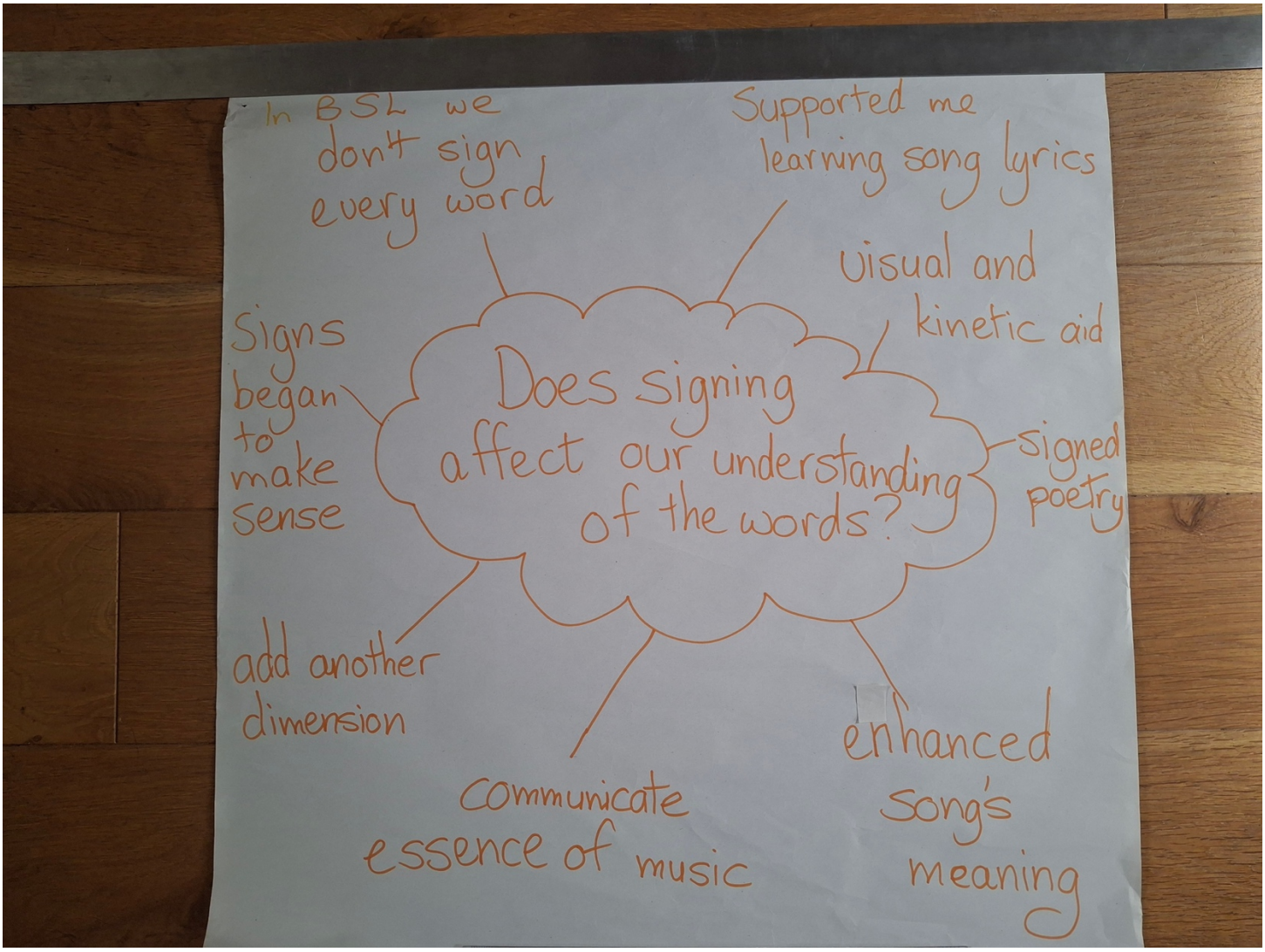


Figure 9: Mind-map - Does signing affect our understanding of the words?

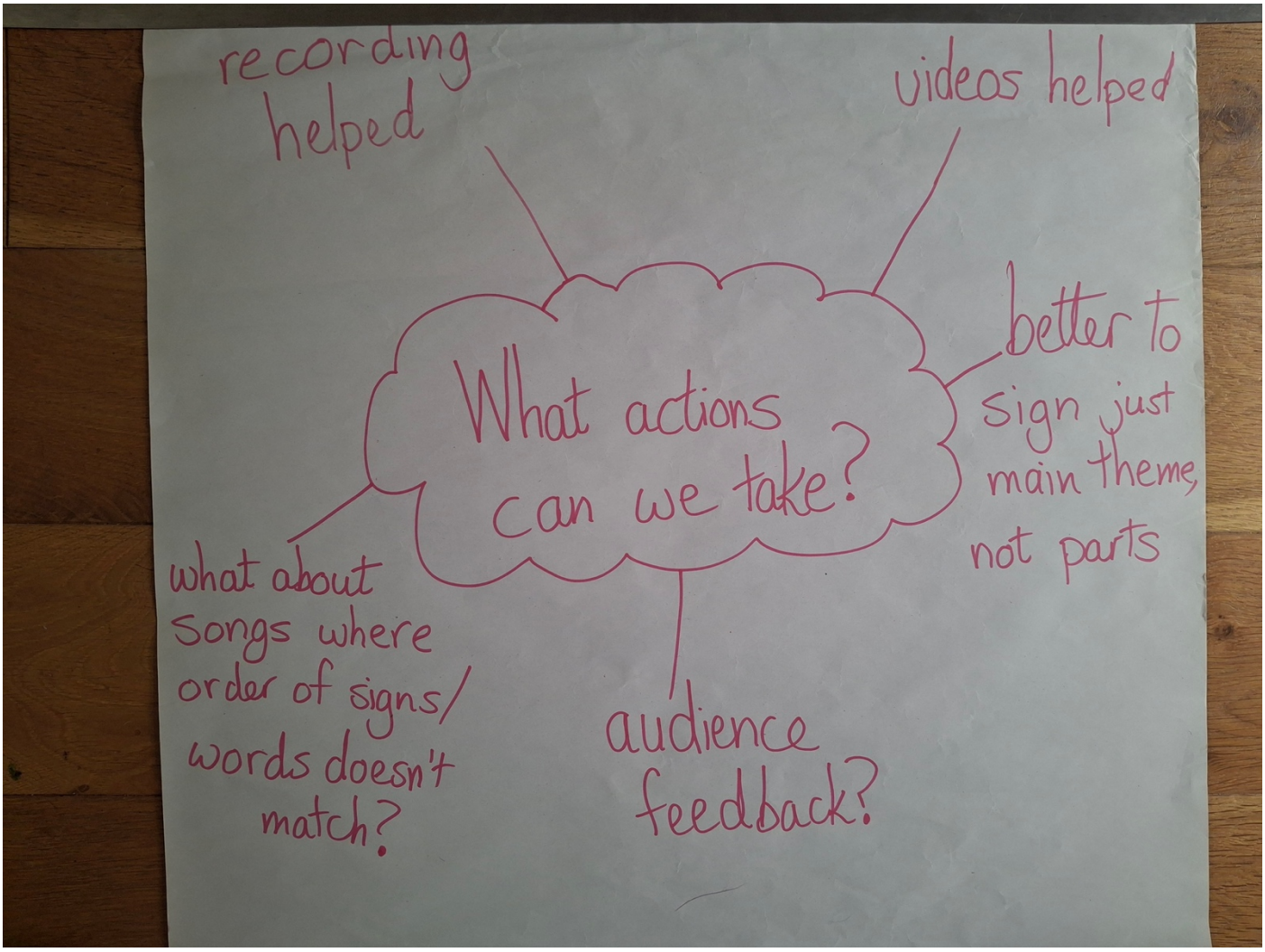


Figure 10: Mind-map - What actions can we take?

Appendix 4: Flipchart Sheets from Adult Choir Focus Group

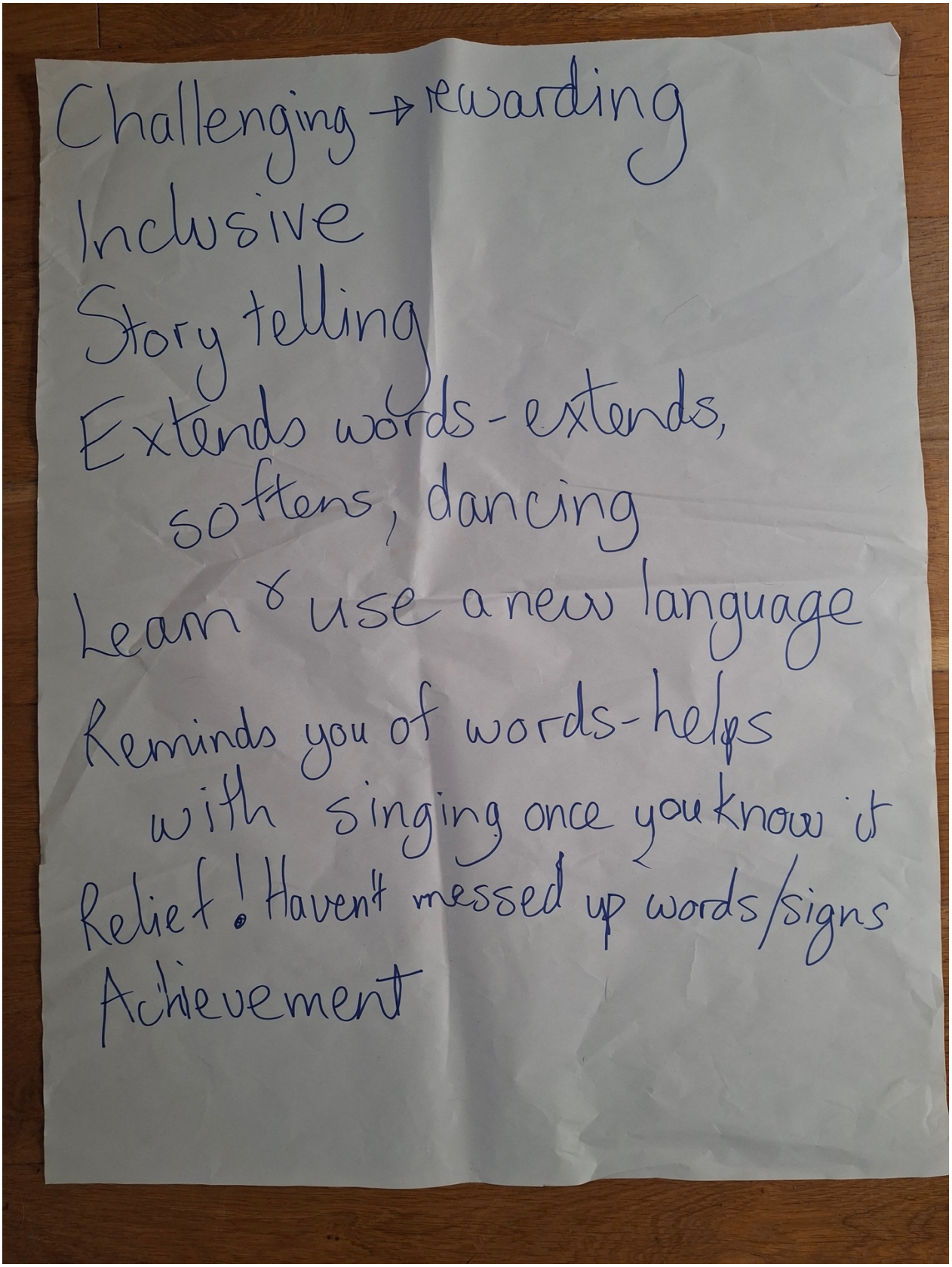


Figure 11: Flipchart Sheet 1

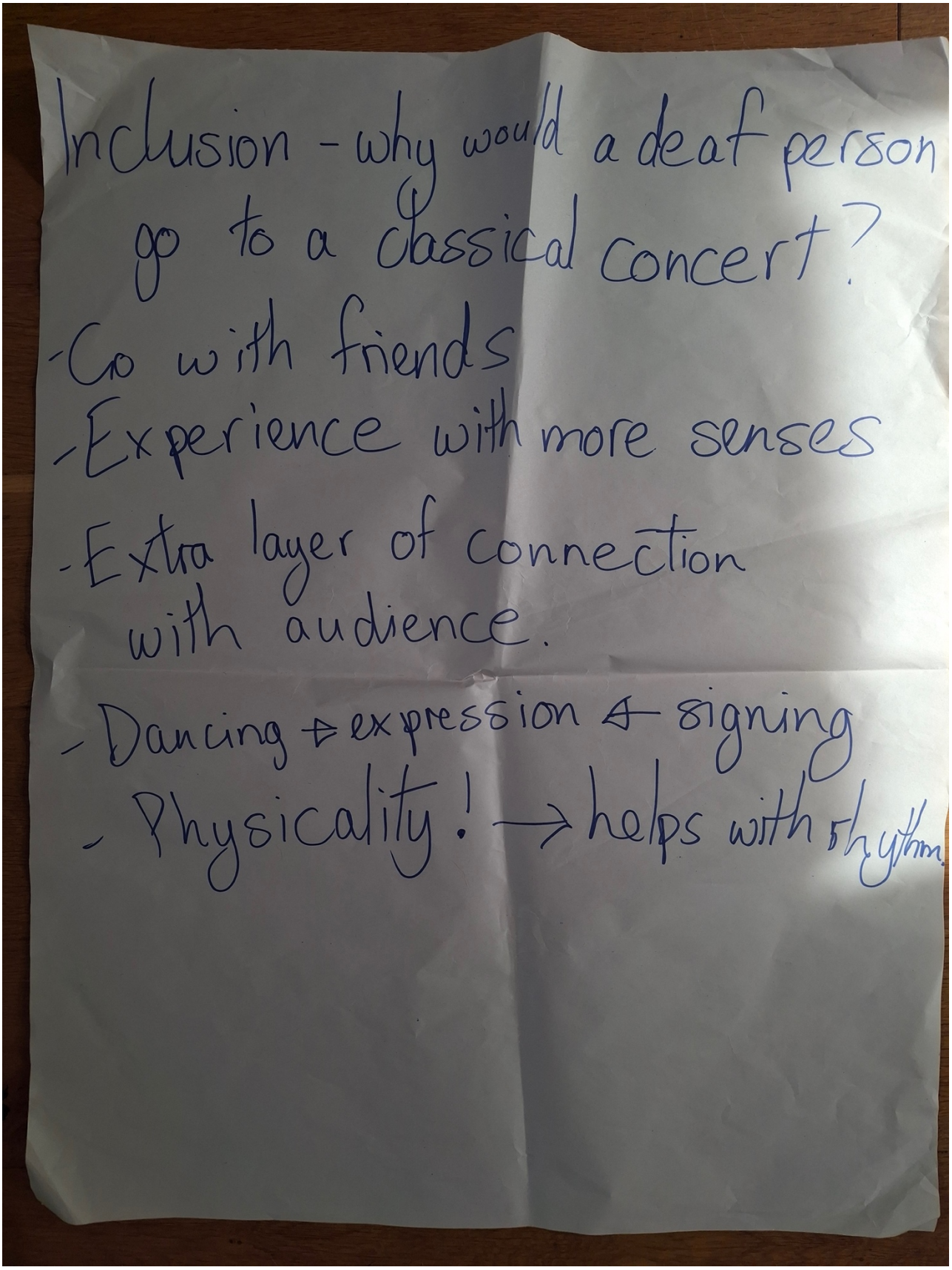


Figure 12: Flipchart Sheet 2

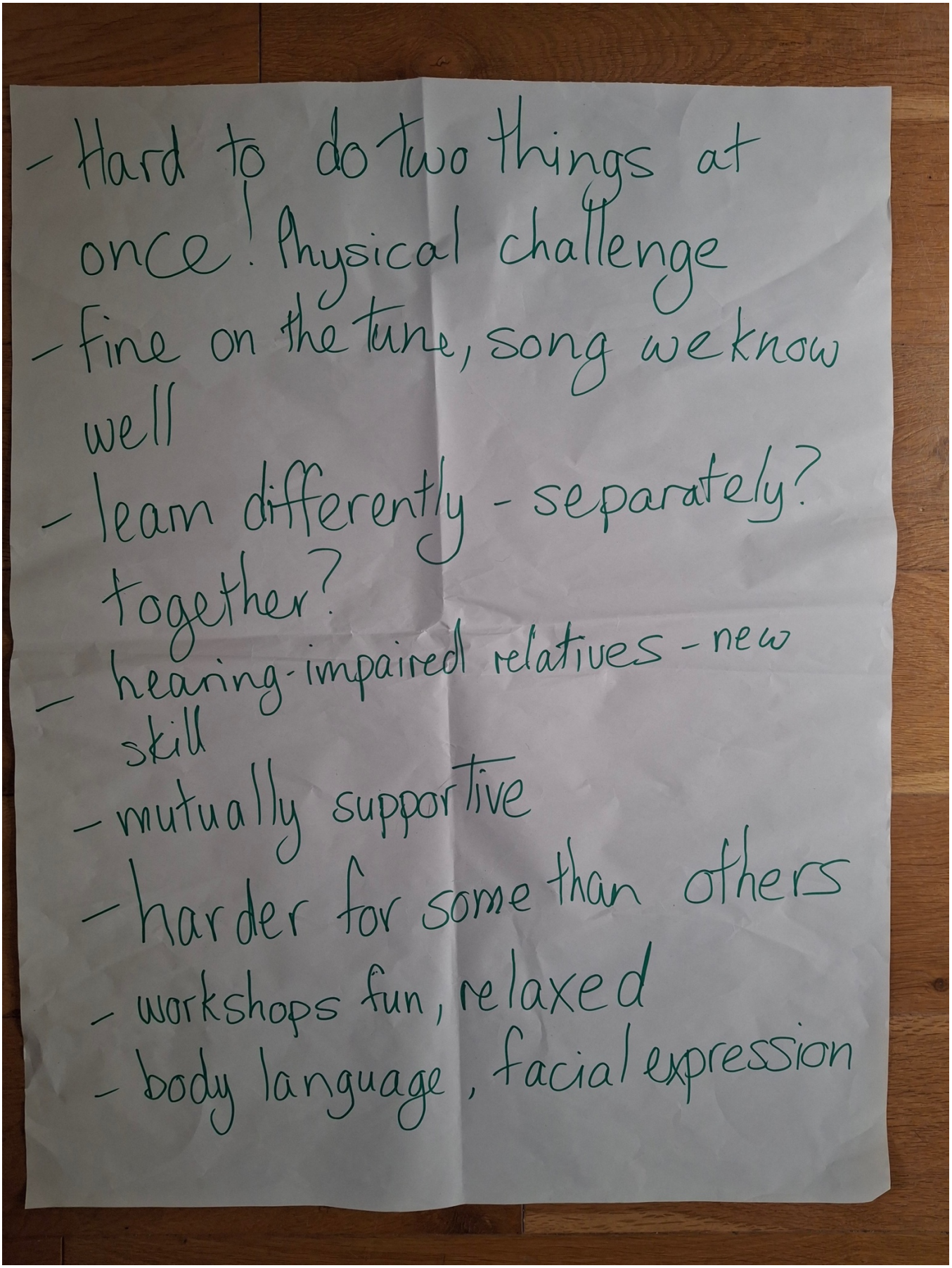


Figure 13: Flipchart Sheet 3

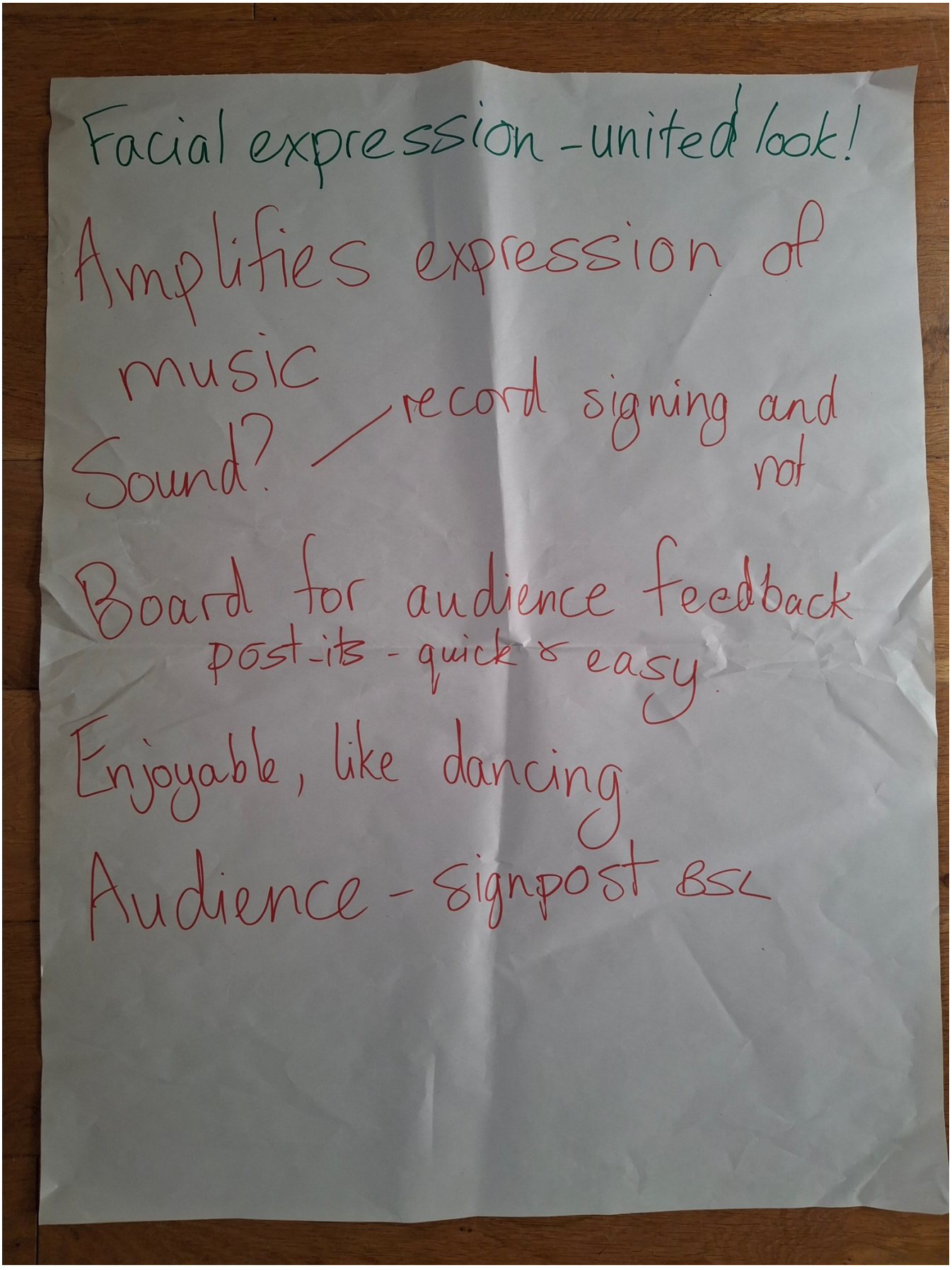


Figure 14: Flipchart Sheet 4

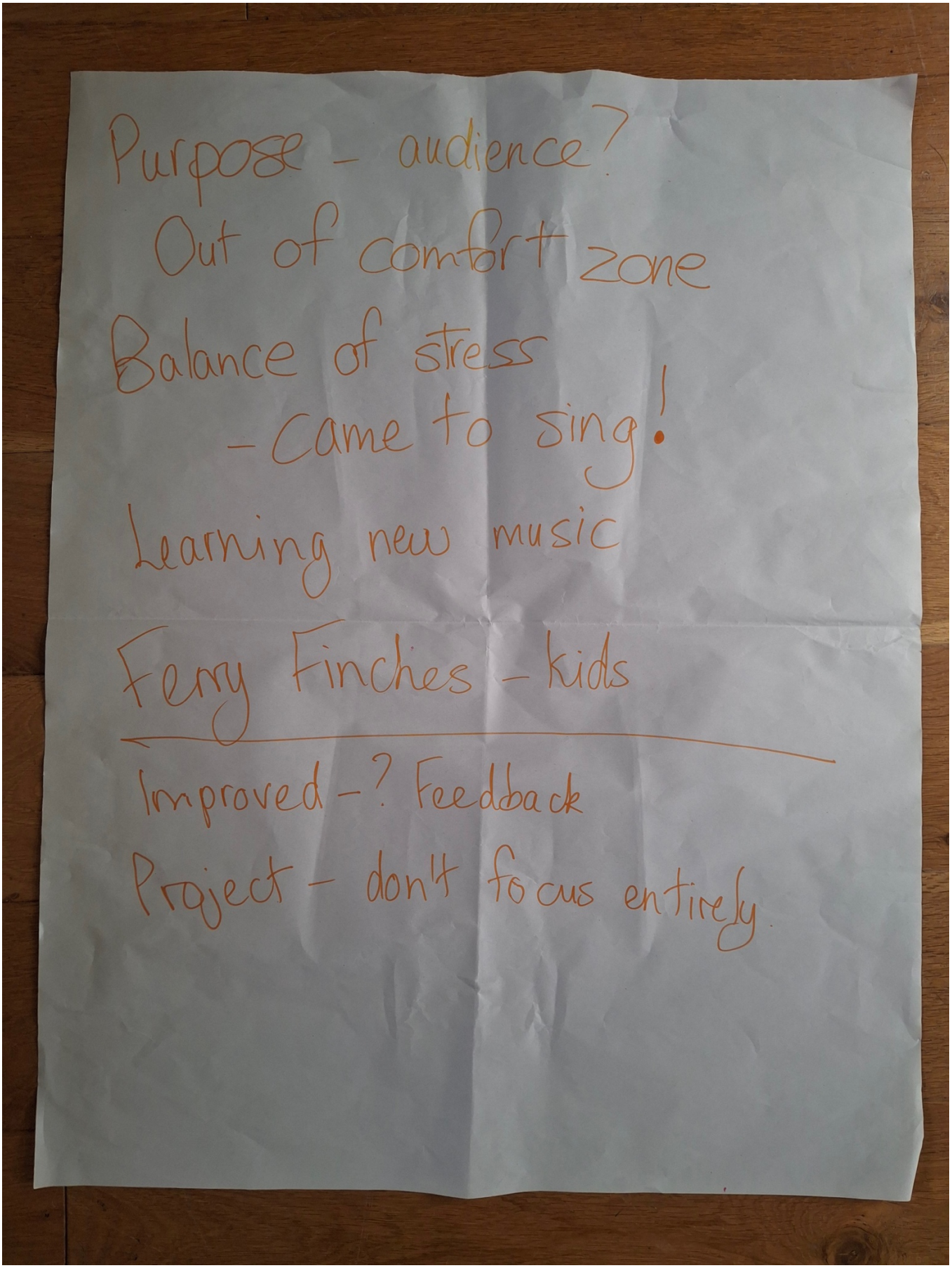


Figure 15: Flipchart Sheet 5

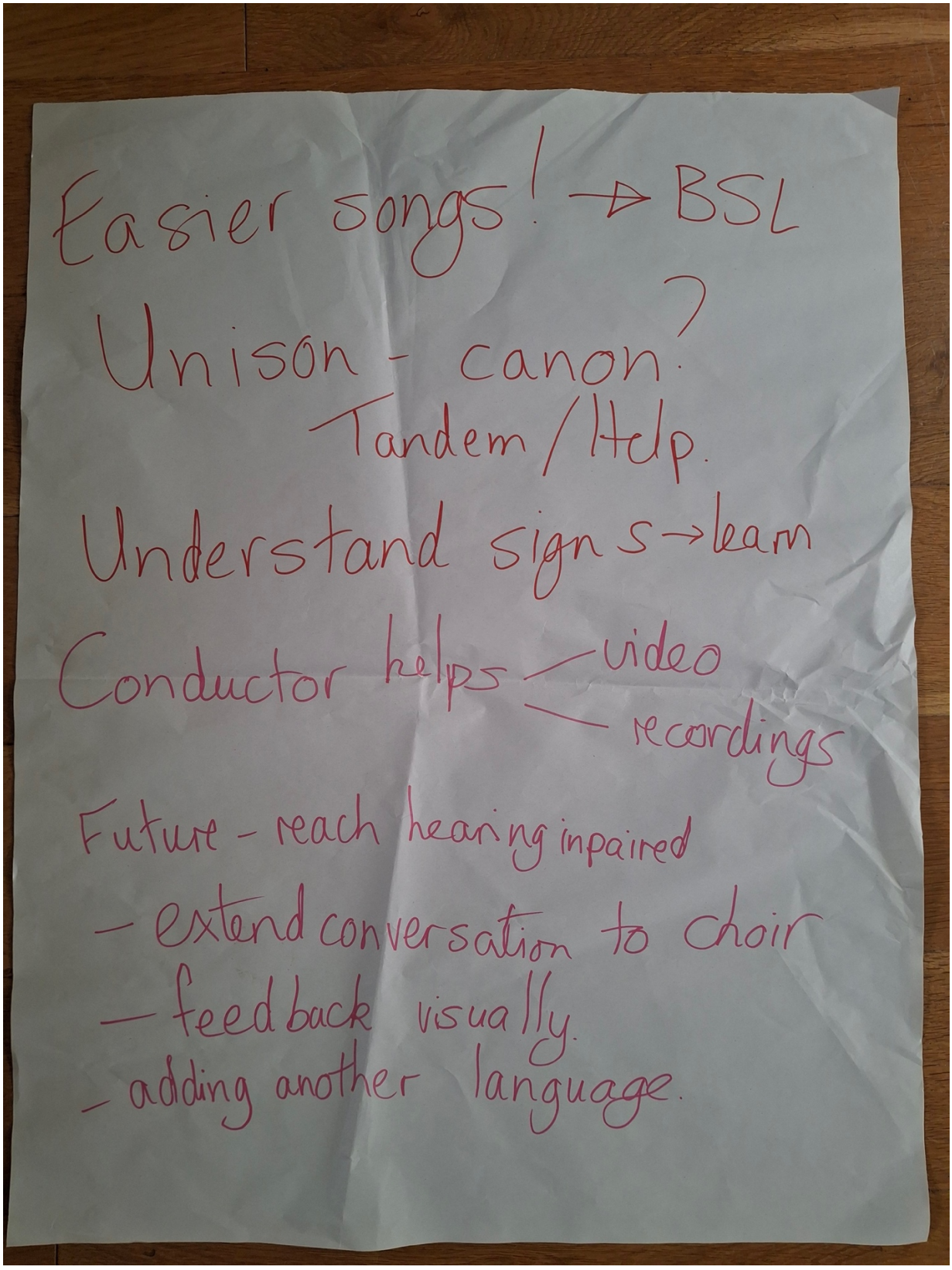


Figure 16: Flipchart Sheet 6

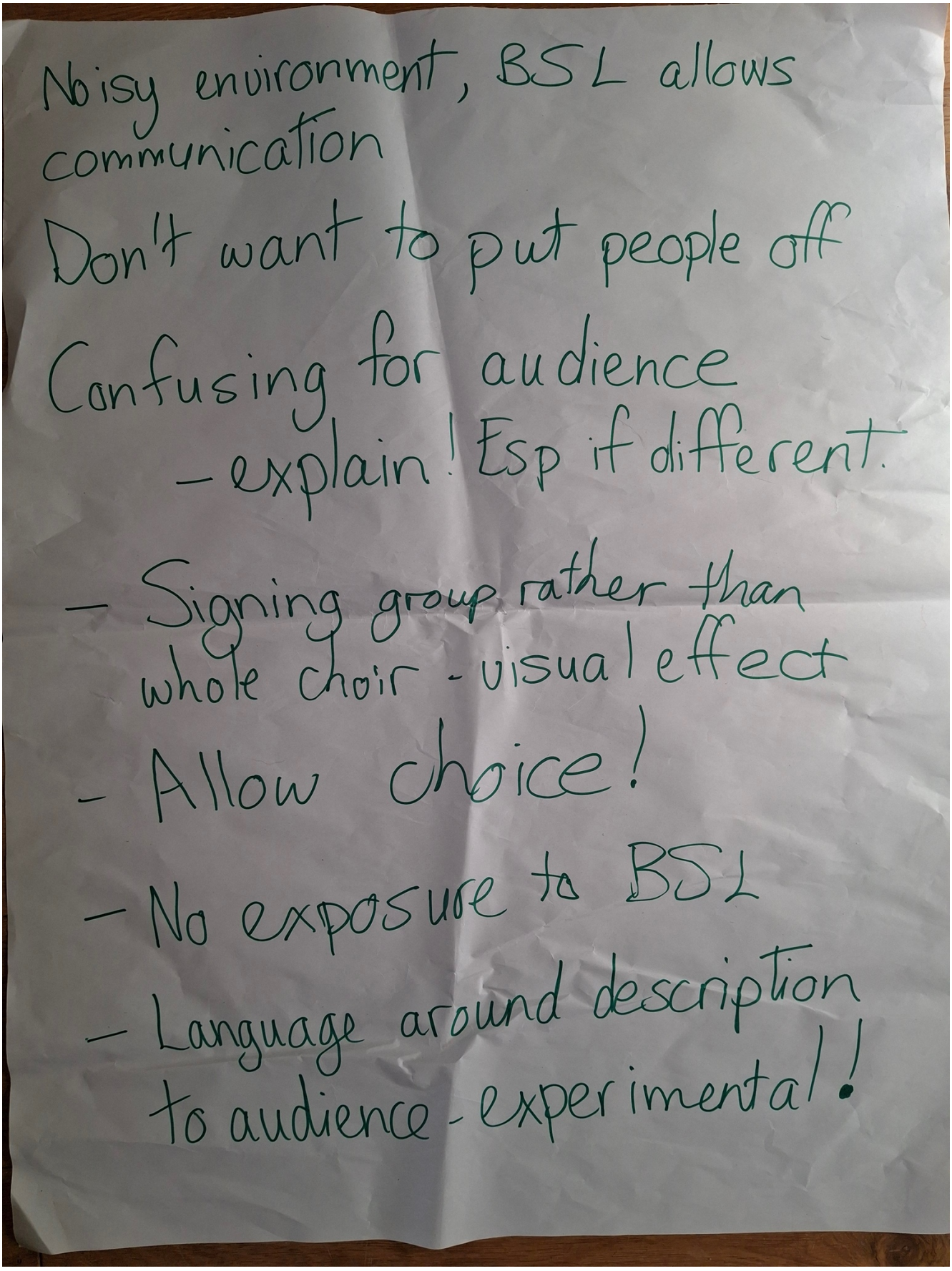


Figure 17: Flipchart Sheet 7

Appendix 5: Flipchart Sheets from Children's Choir Focus Group

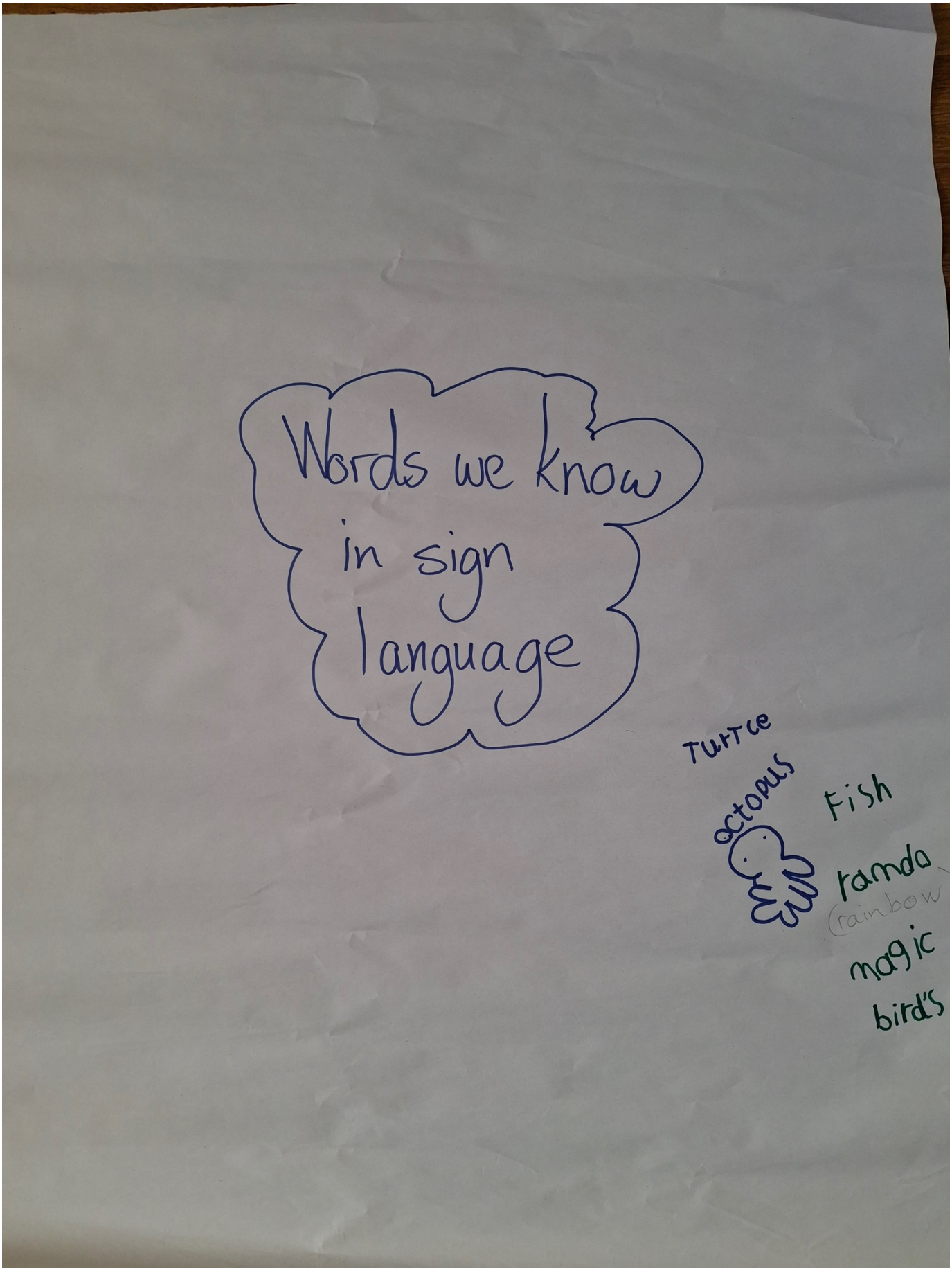


Figure 18: Children's choir mind-map 1

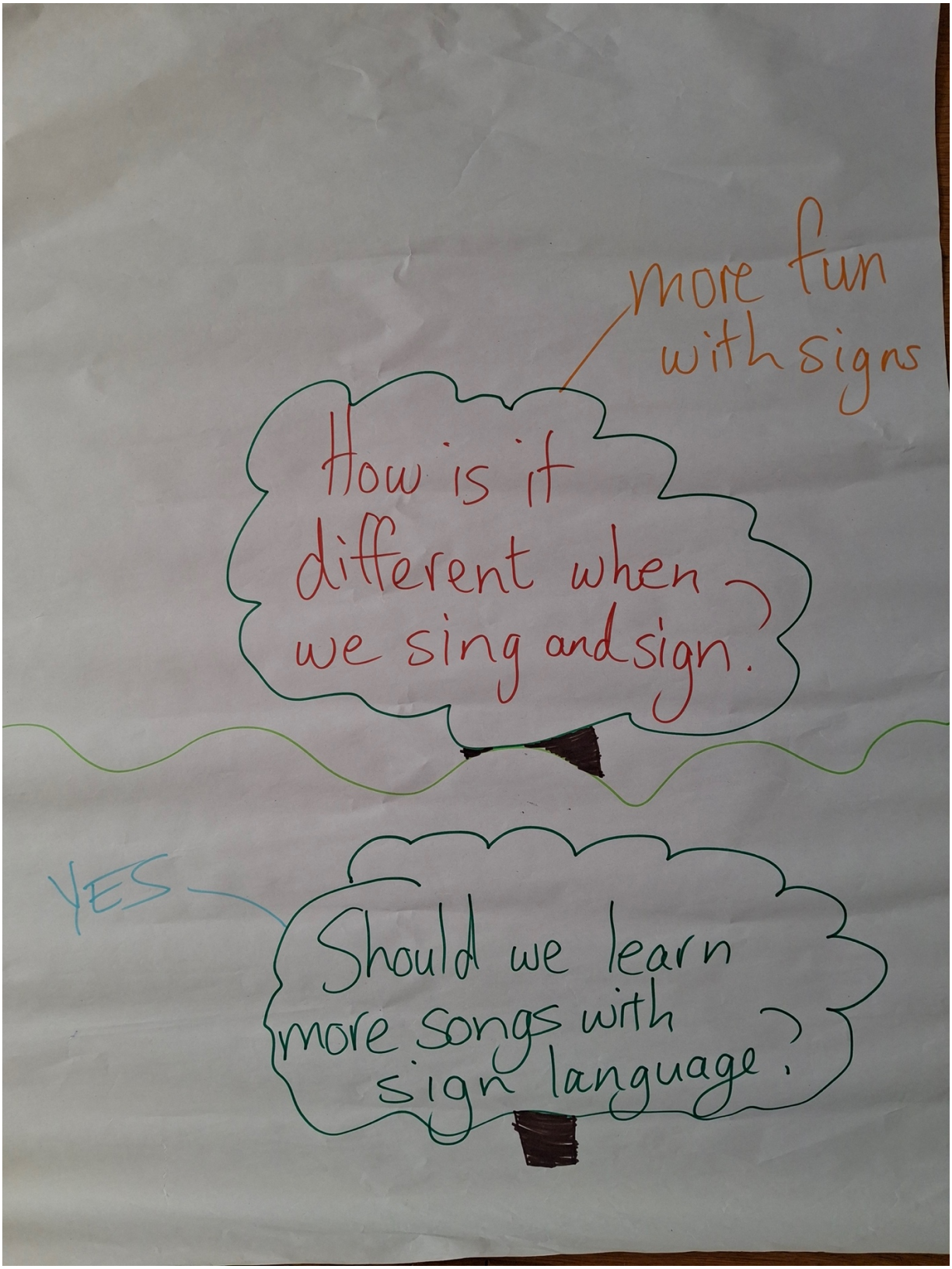


Figure 19: Children's choir mind-map 2

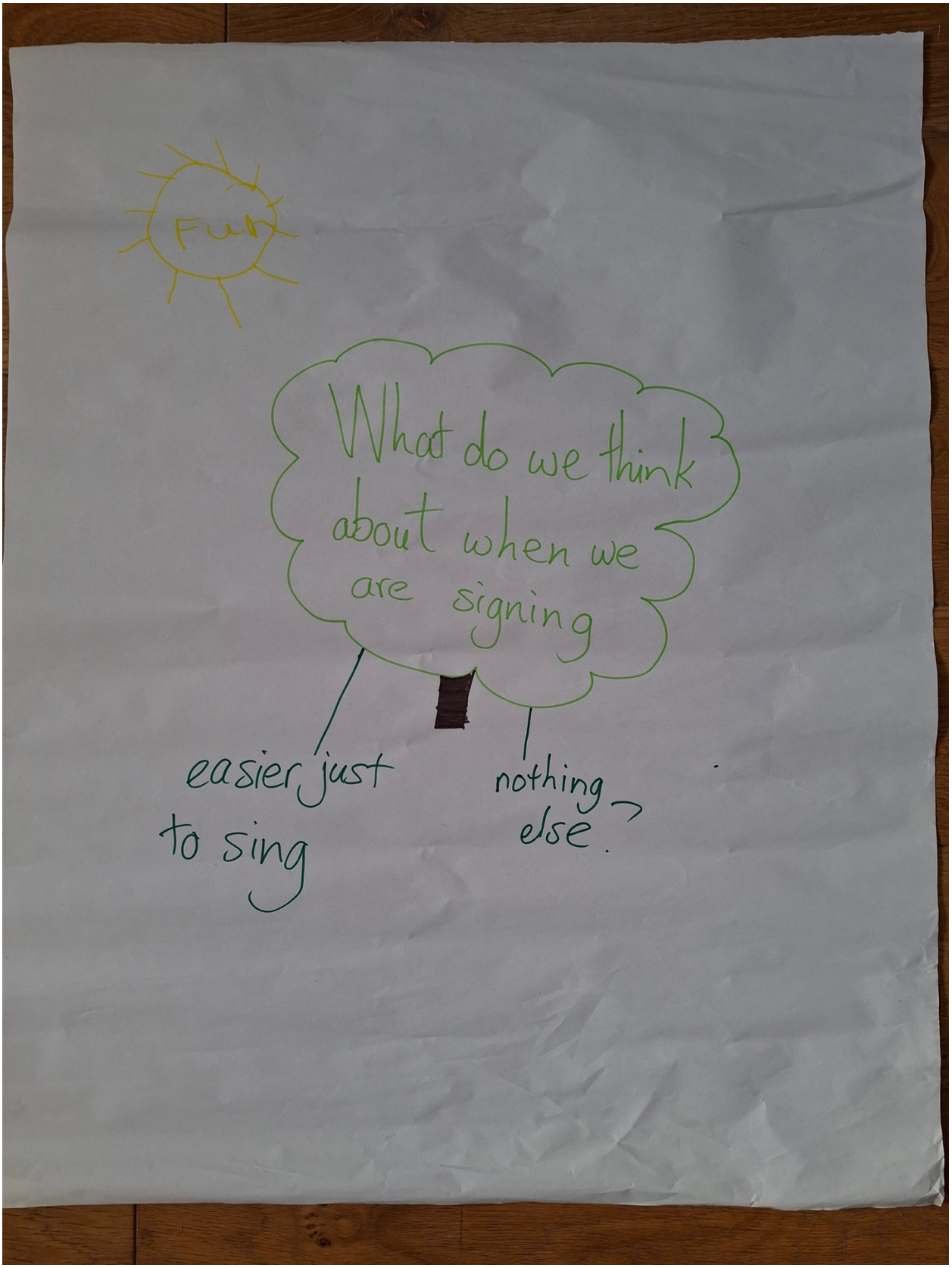


Figure 20: Children's choir mind-map 3

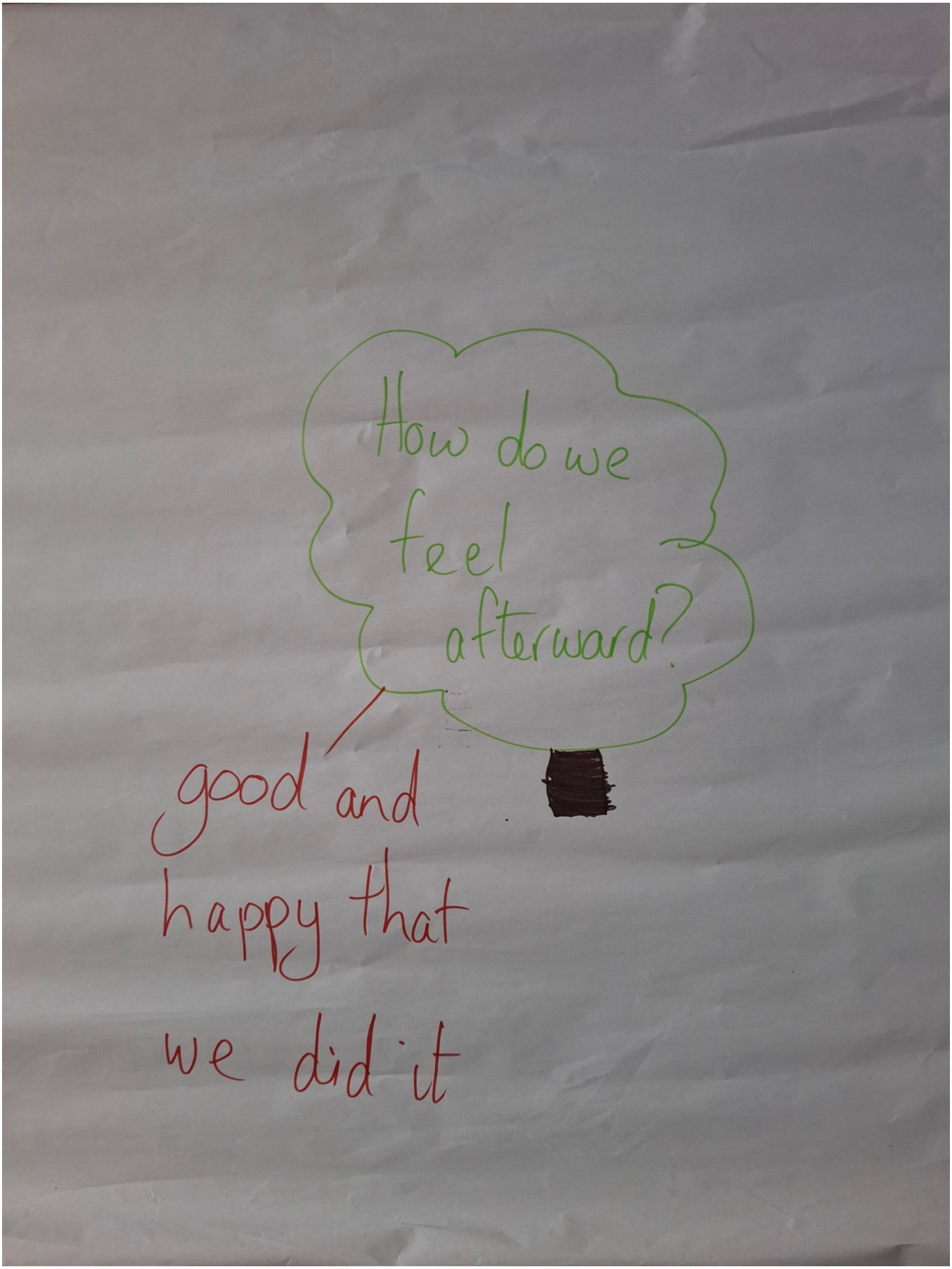


Figure 21: Children's choir mind-map 4

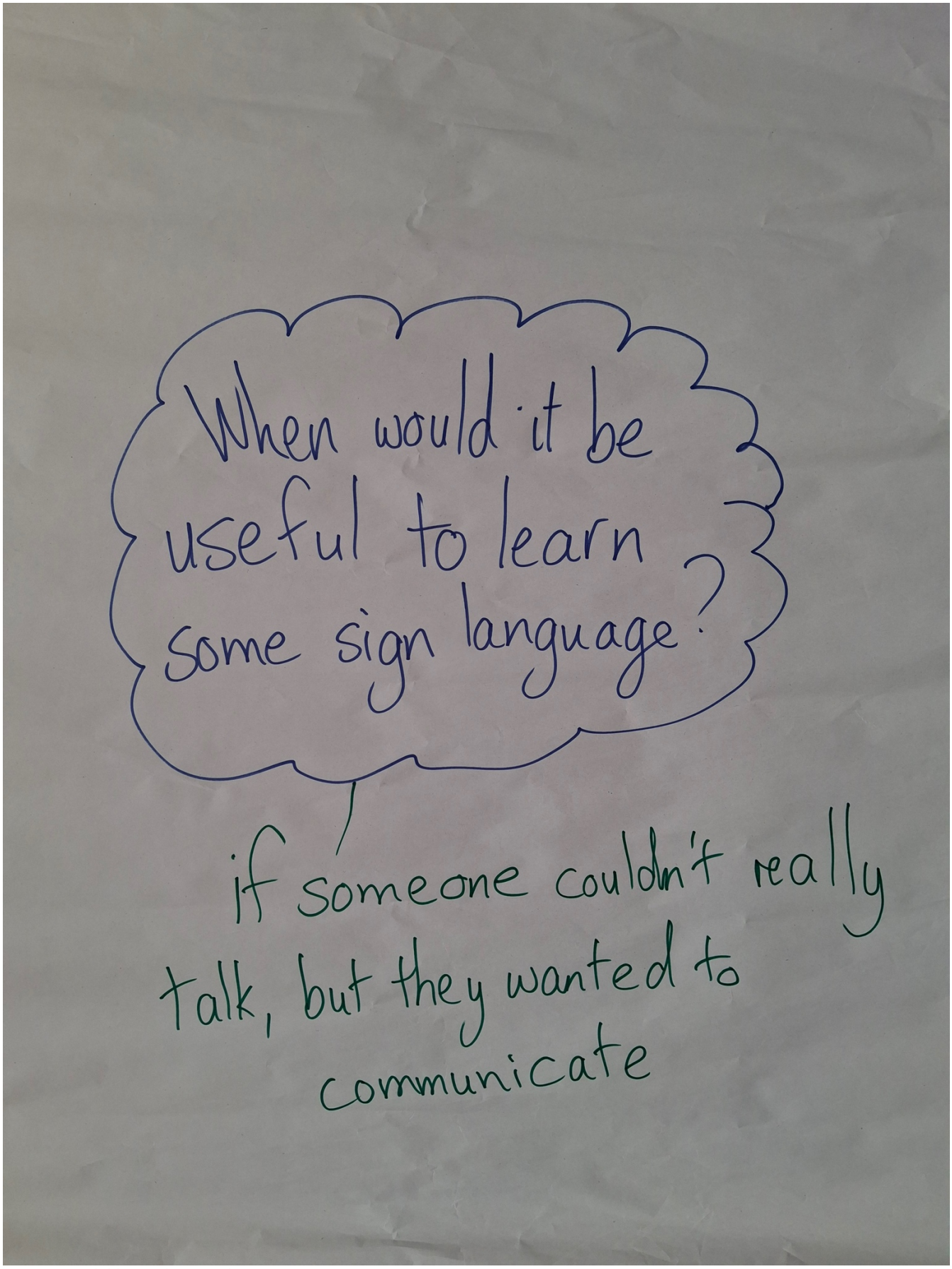


Figure 22: Children's choir mind-map 5

Appendix 6: Flipchart Sheets from Signing Club Focus Group

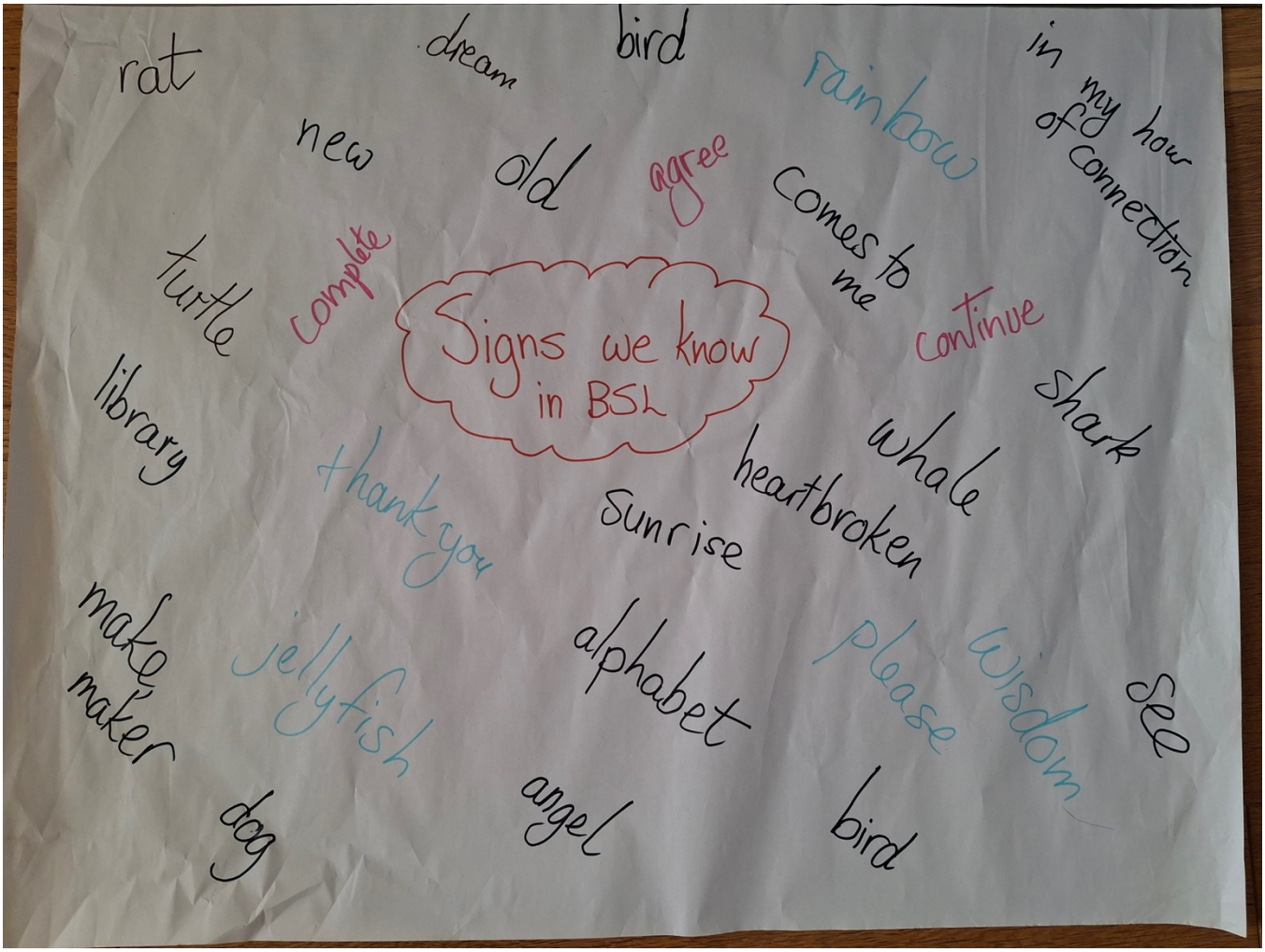


Figure 23: Signing Club mind-map 1

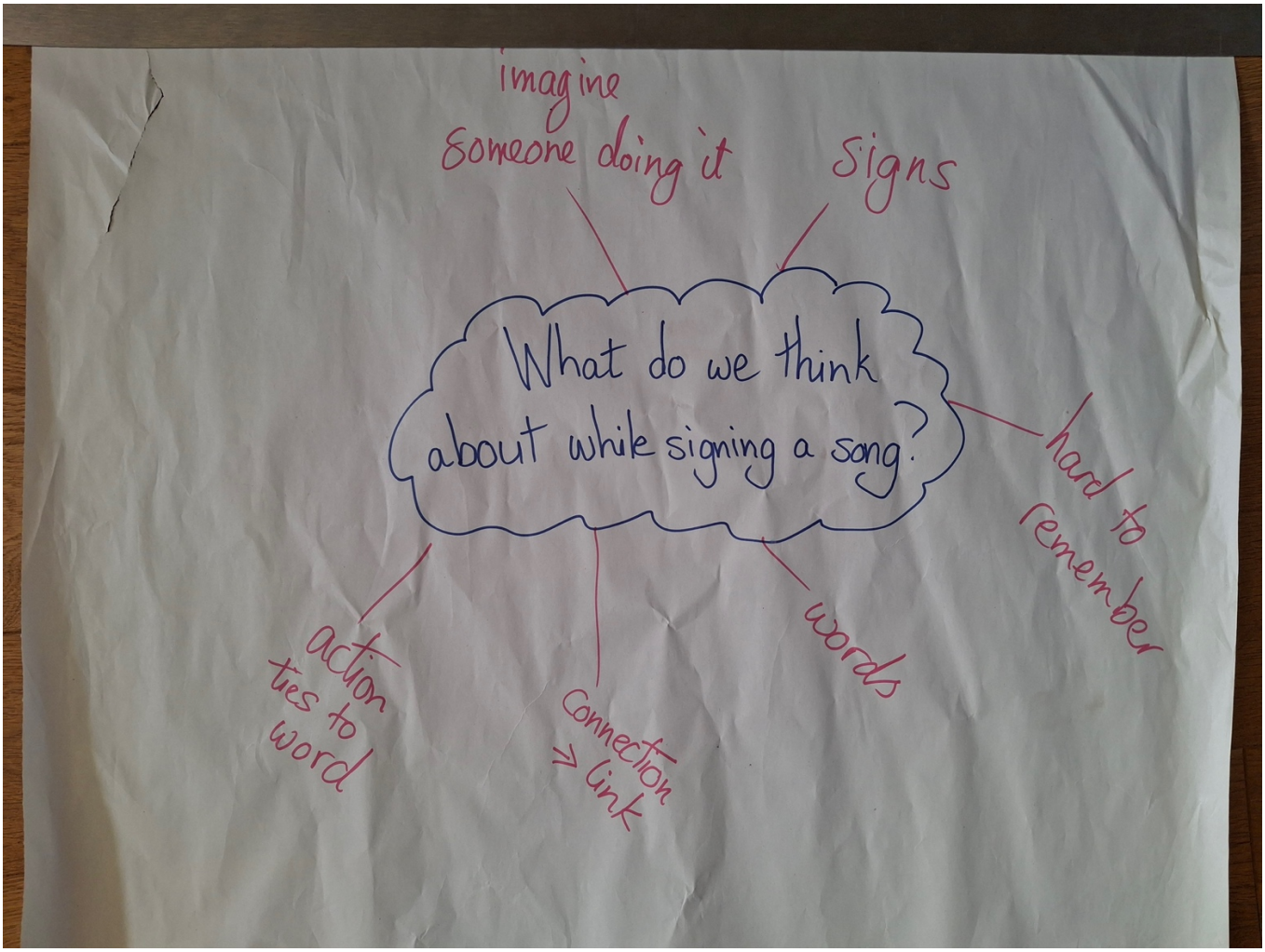


Figure 24: Signing Club mind-map 2

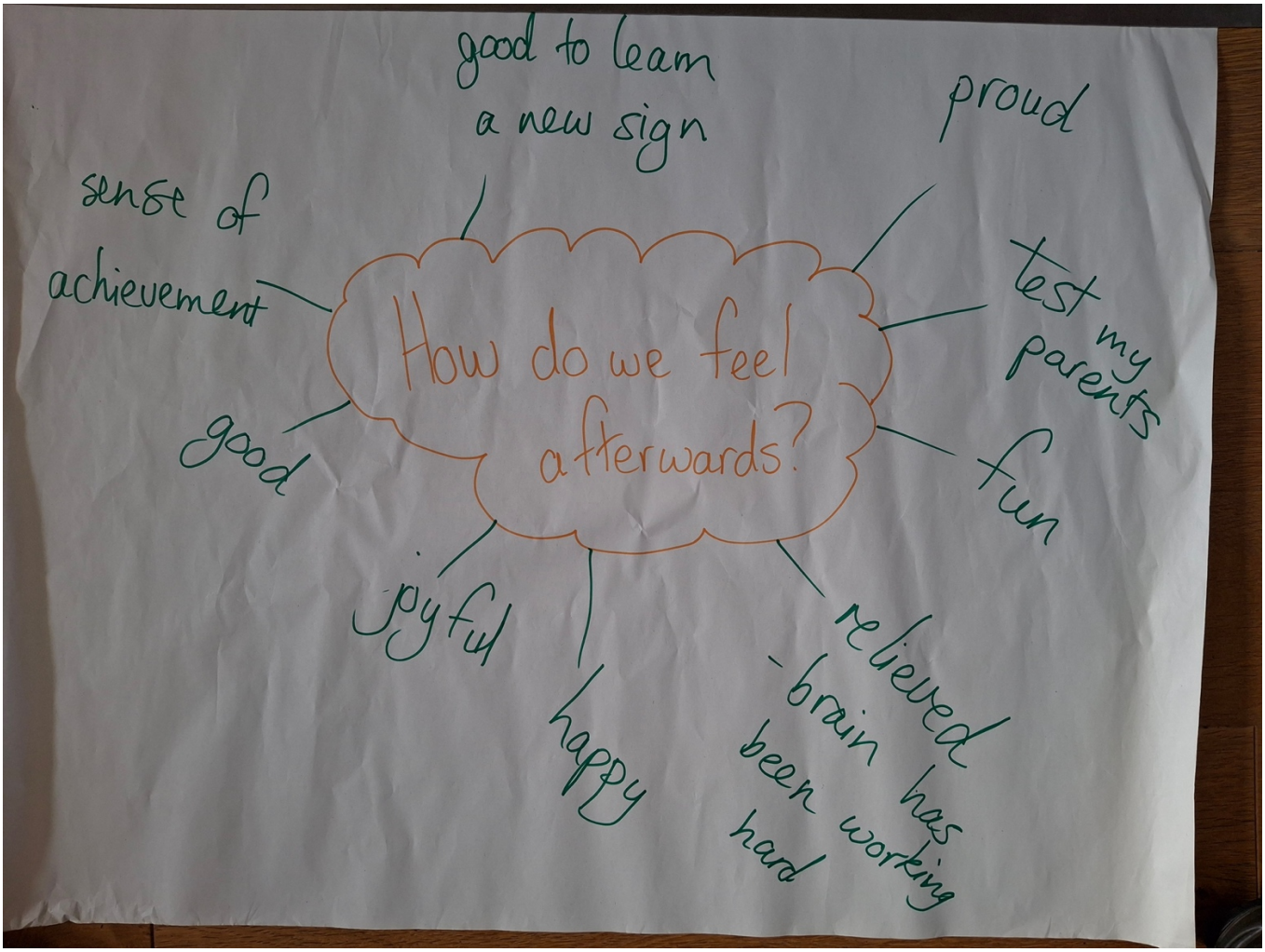


Figure 25: Signing Club mind-map 3

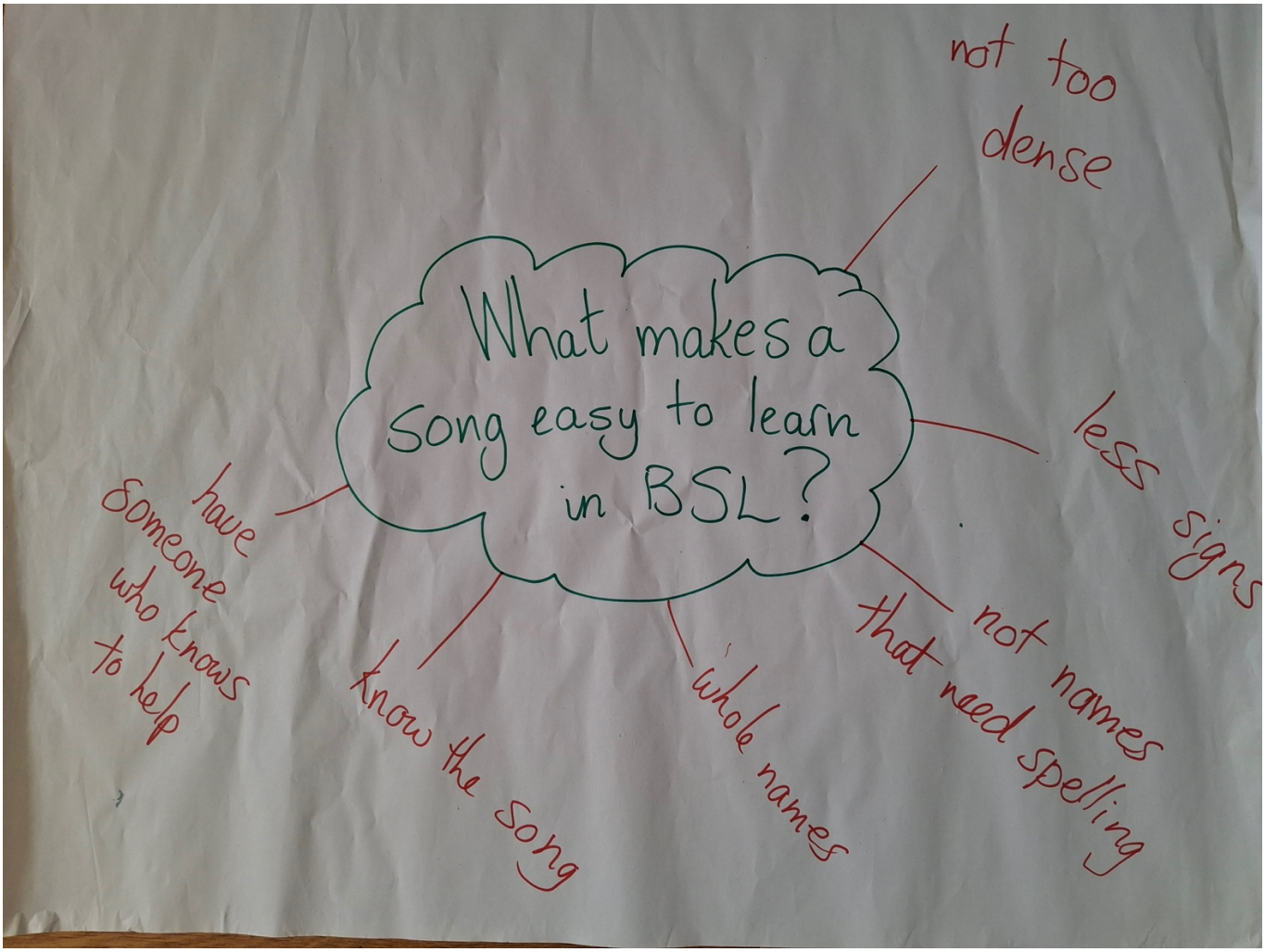


Figure 26: Signing Club mind-map 4

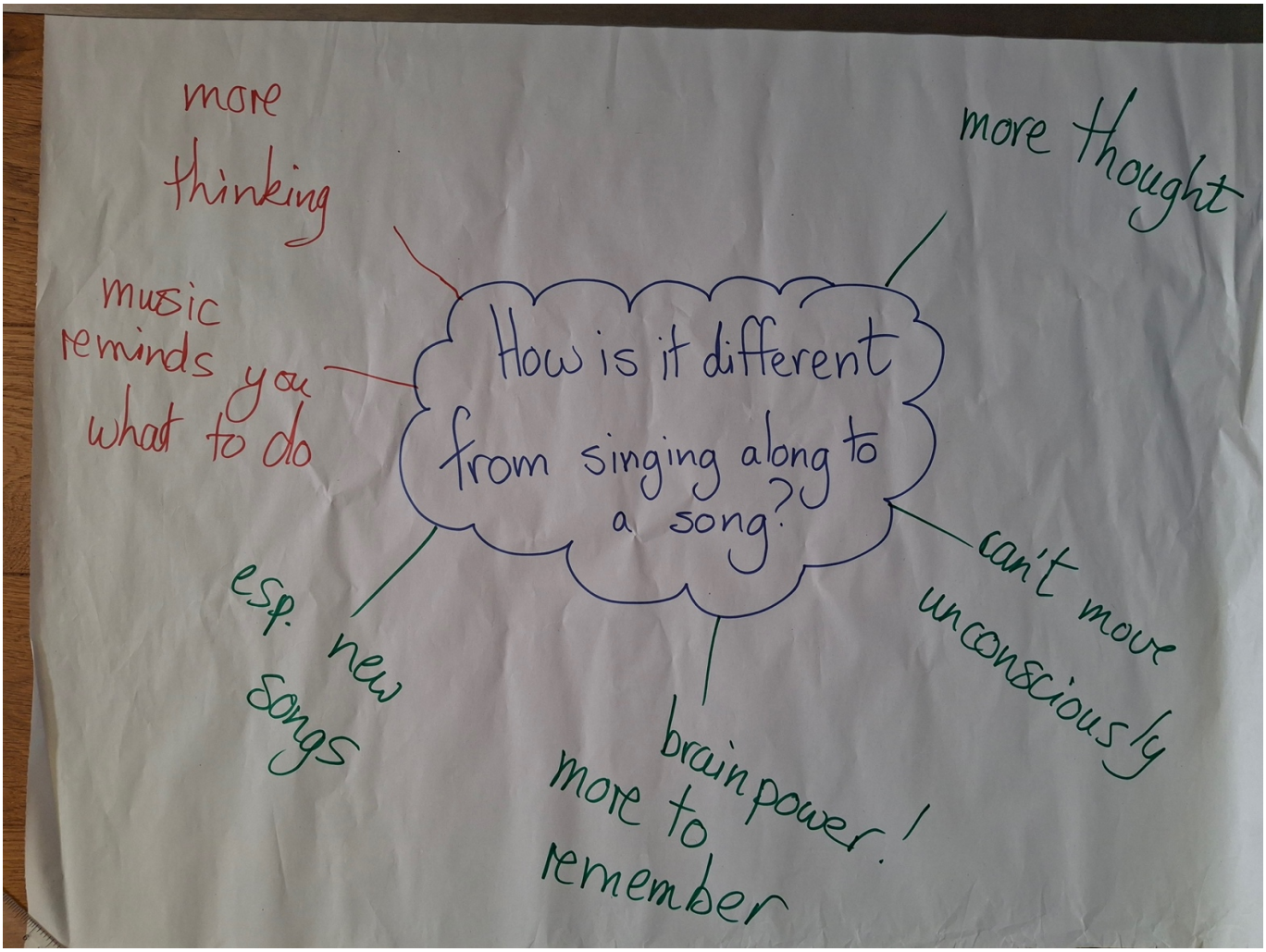


Figure 27: Signing Club mind-map 5

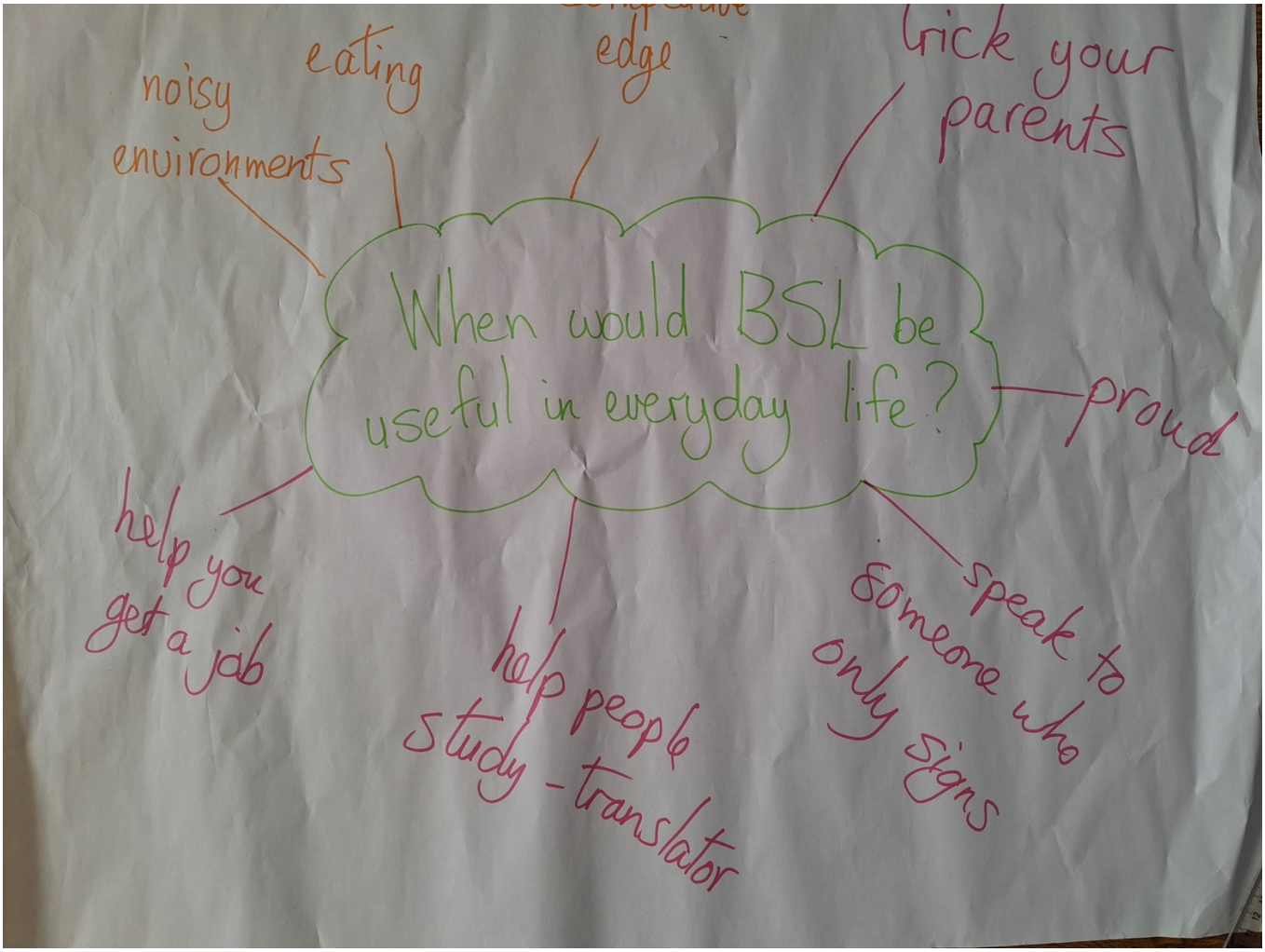


Figure 28: Signing Club mind-map 6

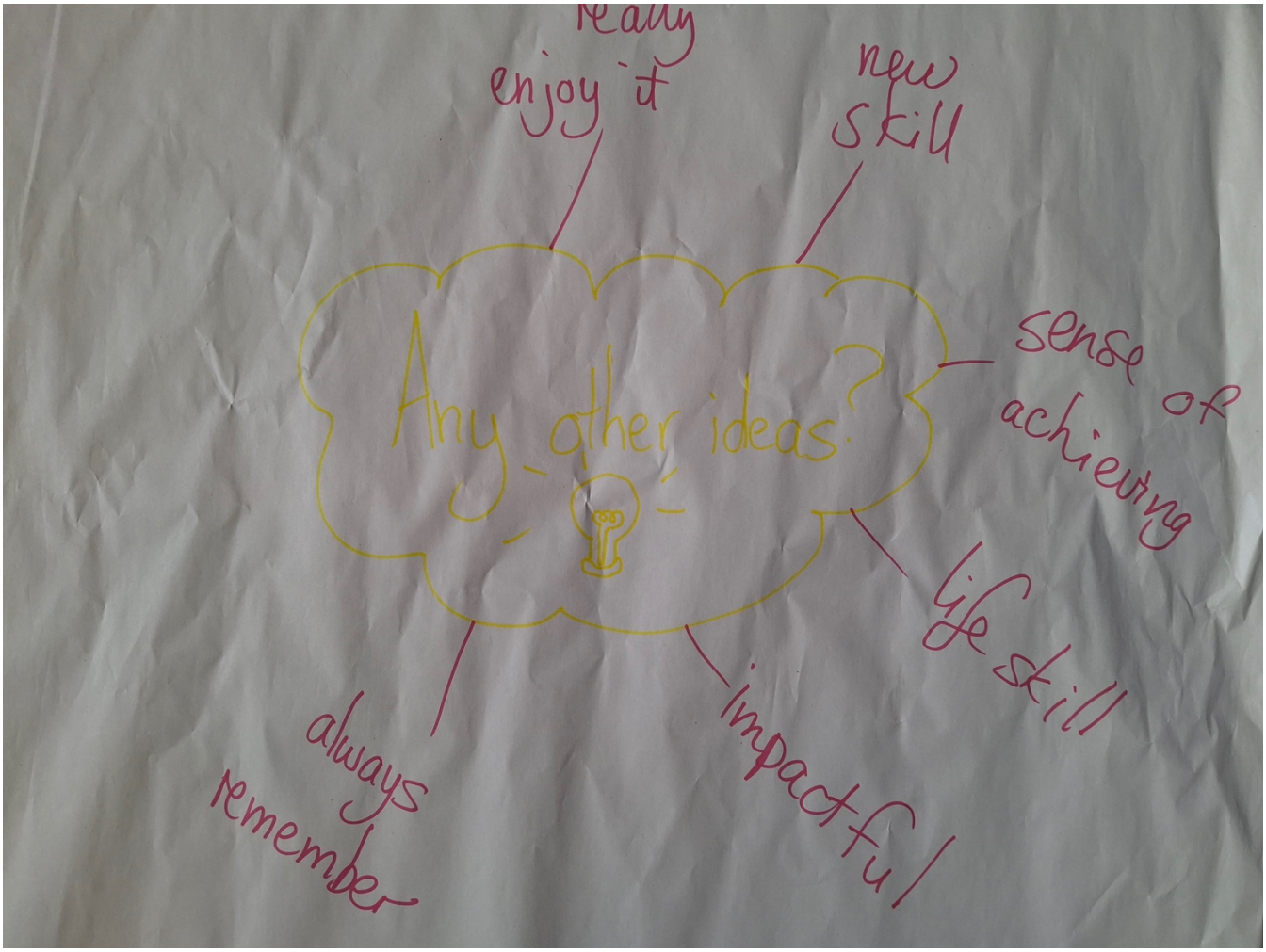


Figure 29: Signing Club mind-map 7

Appendix 7: Focus Group Transcripts

Adult Choir Focus Group, Date: 18 May 2025

(R: Researcher; and Adults 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 participated in focus group)

R: So, let's kick off with – um – the positive one first (which is blue, I'm doing colour-coded…) What are the benefits of making, of signing? How does it make us feel? Those are some of the keywords that came up. Does anybody want to say why they felt any of those things or expand on any of those?
Adult 3: Challenging is the big word that comes out to me
R: Yes?
Adult 3: Um – because um – my coordination is not as good as it could be, so actually getting the words and the movements together is tricky, but it's very good for me to challenge myself to do that, so I find that very rewarding
R: So 'challenging' and 'rewarding'. I'm going to add things on to this as we go…
Adult 1: I'd obviously say it's inclusive [R], it says its 'shared with others'.
R: Uhuh
Adult 1: it makes you feel that you've included everyone in the room, especially those for whom hearing is a difficulty for them.
R: That's fair, yeah. I like that.
Adult 2: It helps me feel like I'm telling the story when I've got the signs added
R: It does, yep
Adult 4: It feels like an extension to the words, really, it's an extension to the words, kindae
R: Uhuh
Adult 4: Brings more meaning and more softness in a way, maybe?
R: How do you mean, softness?
Adult 4: Just like it's nice and rounded and smooth, it feels like a dance. It's nice
Adult 5: I think 'Learning together', 'good for me' and I think – I'm - I find the challenge there, as [Adult 3] said, but it's exciting to be picking up something new, like a new language, and so it must be good for you if you're learning something, and then to use it.
R: Absolutely, yeah
Adult 4: I find watching you when I'm trying to sing without the music, is useful because you sing the words, very, or you kind of mime them in a very good way and I think also when you understand what the signing means, it helps you, it reminds you about the words as well.
R: Mmhm
Adult 4: It kind of helps with the singing
Adult 3: It's hard at first. All these techniques to try and learn things off by heart helps with the signing, but once you get it
Adult 4: Once you get it
Adult 3: The signs give you the words, isn't it? It's just um.

R: So that's on a different thing? It's that – it's initially tricky, but once you know it, it does help?
Adult 4: You feel relief, like, you know, exhilaration, that you haven't messed up the words and you haven't messed up the signing, it's a double, a double enjoyment, a double challenge,
Adult 2: A sense of achievement
Adult 4: Achievement, that's the word, that's the word.
Adult 5: Not messing them up! (Laughter)
R: Achievement, that was the other one…
Adult 5: I have a question [R]:
R: Yes?
Adult 5: A bit of this why? Because there's one big issue for me: I went to a concert in Usher Hall, Philharmonic and - playing Mozart – lovely and there was a choir as well, and there was singing and there was signing, and then I sort of wondered, with maybe 800 people there, what it was the – who benefited – I want to hear a bit from you as well, what you feel in all this, and especially when it is to a mass audience who might be wondering, why is a person next to the orchestra doing sign language?
R: Um – yes, I think that there has been a big push to make music more accessible to people with any kind of disability, any kind of disadvantage in terms of understanding what's happening on the stage. I know Glastonbury has a Sign Zone, and I think that classical music' s just beginning to…
Adult 5: If it has words, or if it doesn't have words? Because I noticed the signer was somehow accentuating the music – where it swelled, and where it dipped.
R: Yes – Paul did one of the BBC 3 Radio essays and was talking about when he's translating into sign language, he's translating the music as well as the text and into a third language and music is one of those languages, and so he is trying to make the music itself more accessible too.
Adult 5: So this fits into a greater – a greater access and service for disabilities?
R: Yes – um – my personal feeling is that it helps – it can be good for hearing people too, because it makes you see the music in a different way.
Adult 6: Yeah, I kind of struggle with this one, because I – in Doncaster there's a lot of deaf community there, and so in the churches and things it's very common to have sign language interpretation of a lot of the hymns and things like that, which I could understand, because that's kind of, you know, part of the praise of the church, and the singing's an important part of that service, but I can't, still couldn't quite understand why somebody who's profoundly deaf would pay fifty pounds to go to the Usher Hall to see a Mozart concert. If, even if there was interpretation, why would you do that? But then I've got a friend who's completely blind who does travel holidays for blind people, who says like, "I might want to go to the Taj Mahal, and even though I can't see it, I might want somebody to stand next to me while I'm there, and kind of smell it, and hear it, and somebody describe it to me. So, you know, why would he go to an art gallery, why would he go and travel and see the world, if he can't see it. So, it's really hard to kind of imagine what a deaf person is getting out of being at a classical music concert, but –
Adult 2: Again, it's that inclusion thing though; if you've got a group of friends and every time they go to a music concert, and you feel that you can't go 'cos you can't hear, you're missing out, so if you've got a way of going where you can get something from the music, even if you can't hear it in the traditional sense, that's going to make you feel included, isn't it?

Adult 6: Yeah, he's made a whole business out of like um travel for blind people, that want to see the world, but they can't see,
Adult 2: Yeah
Adult 6: So there must be, there must be some correlation there, like that.
Adult 5: I think almost the signer at the concert I went to, was obviously very much part of the show. Because he was really good, and he put his - he emoted with signing, and I thought, that's clever stuff. As opposed to, so could I ask the question, as you did, why would a deaf person want to go to an orchestral concert, and the answer is, inclusion and to make it worth taking in with the senses?
Adult 1: And although there are a lot of deaf people, they can experience music with five senses, they can experience music in different ways, through vibrations in a vague way. So if you have someone signing to enhance that, then that increases their understanding of what's being performed, and their enjoyment.
Adult 6: I don't think that us doing it as our choir, though, it's going to suddenly increase our audience, by a whole lot of profoundly deaf people are going to start wanting to come to our concerts. I don't think, you know, I don't think that's what we're doing it for.
R: No
Adult 4: I think, you know on that point, it's a fair education for people who do come to our concerts, an education from us, but what we've gone a bit off-piste here, is that what you want, or would you rather get the structure?
R: That's a good question. I think that this is a very good line of thought, so I would like to…
Adult 4: To continue?
R: …keep with that, then we'll work out where we are on the map, make sure we've covered everything as we go. Because I think that whole, what you were saying about experiencing music with all your senses: it's not just what you hear, it's um
Adult 4: The thing that the conductor, if you like: like you talked about, whoever was talking about the classical music, you know they, the guy who's doing the translation for signing is also translating the music, and in a way, you as a conductor is already doing that, you know you're using non-verbal signs to us and people can see that from behind, it's always very interesting at a classical concert to see that, and it's just maybe someone facing the concert, facing the audience doing that at the concert, I don't know, you know, would maybe help.
Adult 2: But against.
R: Sometimes - that's an interesting point [Adult 4]., because something I picked up on a conducting course once, is that sometimes what I'm doing as a conductor is telling the audience where to look: this is where the exciting thing's going to happen, it's not just about making those people sing, sometimes I'm saying, this is the interesting bit, listen over here.
Adult 5: Sorry: Are people going to a concert to see the conductor as well, and they sell – the selling point is the conductor!
Adult 3: If it's Simon Rattle!
R: If it's Simon Rattle, yes!
Adult 2: You were talking about all five senses, and I'm just thinking about how we were in our black, and how much better a response, and how much more relaxed we are with our different colours

R: Yep
Adult 2: And if you go see a choir that's very formal and don't move, how you get a different experience from a choir that is moving around, and maybe dressed in different colours, so it isn't just the hearing.
Adult 4: We 're finding it interesting to learn the sign language, and I think people in the audience would find it interesting to watch, you know, 'cos they're learning the signing from us. And also, it's educational for them to watch us, and it's getting signing out there a bit more.
Adult 3: I think it's another way of – I mean, when we're singing, we're connecting with the audience, and I just think it extends the level of connection, it's not just the pitch, the volume, the expression from your face, it's a whole new layer of communication from the body.
Adult 2: And if you're signing, you have to be looking out, you can't use music, so just by that you're communicating with your face
Adult 4: You're communicating with the audience. I feel it is, if you can have like a conductor, with music - at the moment there's no signing, you could have a conductor, then you could have people dancing, expressing the music if you like, then the signing brings that expression, another layer of expression. You can feel quite dance-y when you do it, like the Three Little Birds, you know what I mean? It feels quite dance-y for me, it's nice to move.
Adult 3: Hail Holy Queen's a classic at that. It's like some of the African ones we've done, you know it becomes quite physical. I suppose that's a much better use of physicality, actually using other parts of your body to…
Adult 6: I sometimes find actually the… sometimes the physical movements and the signing, all that, helps you with the rhythm as well, I find when we've got a syncopated rhythm or something it can be easier if you think about moving.
R: I don't want to lose that point you were making about we're not doing it because, necessarily to reach profoundly deaf people, so don't let me forget about that, but I want to put it in the pink one. Right. I think that's a really good general picture of the kind of benefits, but I also want to have a look at what makes it harder, what are the challenges, which is… green. It can be confusing; some people find it really challenging to do two things at once. Another thing that came up was is it's a lot to remember.
Adult 7: I've spoken to some of the older people. They're finding it very difficult to do signing.
R: To do both?
Adult 5: Yes, it's hard!
Adult 7: Speak for yourself! (general laughter)
Adult 6: It's not necessarily an age thing.
R: No! I think some people have more co-ordination…
Adult 6: I think I'm dyspraxic, [my husband] thinks I'm dyspraxic as well, and he's an expert! But I, I can't dance, I can't do anything that – I've got a good understanding of rhythm from playing music, but I can't, I can't kind of disassociate my body movements, I'm clumsy and drop things and whatever, so I find it really hard to make my body move when I want it to. And I find, it's fine if, when we were doing it with Paul, when we were just sort of singing the tune, I could kind of do that, that bit of my brain is not working memory, kind of, you know, on a song that I know, but when I was – when I'm trying to do it when we're singing in parts,

and I'm trying to remember the note, my part and when I come in and do the motions, I just find that really hard, to flip between concentrating, I have to really concentrate on making my body do what it needs to do.
Adult 2: Yeah, I suppose it's the way you do it, so do you learn your parts first and then add the signs in, would that be easier? 'Cos some people would prefer to do both, and other people would prefer to do the singing bit first.
Adult 4: People learn…
R: Mmm
Adult 4: We're all new at signing. I feel quite, a bit ignorant in a way because I don't sign. And I've got, my cousin's got three disabled children, and I feel this is a nice opportunity to do it. But I think, I think it gets easier the more you do it. I find coming back to it, it feels, the Three Little Birds song, it's like, oh I know that, I know that. Like, you get: it's familiarity, it comes.
Adult 6: Yeah – it's just - I can do the signing and sing the tune, or I can sing my part, but it's just, you know, I can't…
Adult 3: Combining it all
Adult 6: Yeah:
Adult 3: Simultaneously
Adult 6: Yeah
Adult 2: Especially if they don't have the tune and they're trying to remember the part
Adult 6: Yeah
Adult 2: It's tricky
Adult 6: I think – like for the concerts and things, I think once, once I get to where –like when we did it fine, I got to the point where I was very comfortable with the part, then I can do it, but, I think just getting (my brain's just constantly switching between) I can't concentrate on more things at the same time.
Adult 3: Of course, when you finally get it, um, I feel it's - it's all kind of mutually supportive, you know, the words and the signing, the movement, they reinforce each other.
Adult 6: Yeah. I just don't trust my body to move when I want it to.
Adult 3: Well, maybe, if it works, maybe your body will follow the notes?
Adult 4: That's a challenge for you, then when you do achieve it, it's then a double whammy, you know, well I've managed the song and I've managed to sign
Adult 6: I don't think it's a level playing field for everybody, learning the signs and the words, I mean, for age or, you know, disability, or whatever, its
Adult 5: I found Signing Three Little Birds, you could, it's really just putting your toe in the water with sign language, get secure with that , so that you could then say, well, I get this far, then it might be fun to see how far I can go further, so it's a good introduction, as you see as per doing it separately.
R: Yeah, I think it's a really nice introduction to BSL. When we learn to speak, there's a lot of singing and slow talking goes on with babies, and it just gives you a bit more time to find your way round the words. So if you do want to learn something, it's easier when it's slower and more fun.
Adult 4: I think that the songs we're doing it in, are achievable, and you've been really good at, like, not – you're very encouraging and never judgemental. If somebody's doing something wrong, you never show it in your face.

R: Usually I'm concentrating that hard myself!
Adult 4: You're very – you just let people do it in a relaxed environment. Is it that important if you make a little mistake? You know, it's kind of you haven't, you haven't put pressure on us to achieve it 100 percent, that means you are a bit more relaxed.
Adult 6: You never did the workshop with Paul, but he was very like that, wasn't he?
Adult 2: The workshops were really lovely. He just - seeing someone who uses it all the time, being able to get little tips from him. And he made it fun.
Adult 6: Yeah.
Adult 3: I've never come across anyone so communicative in my life, even his little pinky was telling me something! Just his facial expressions - his body language was just phenomenal.
Adult 4: My nephew, he's non-verbal – my cousin, because of his children, My cousin, it's amazing, He just is anyway the type who can get up and dance really well and he just does it naturally. I was at an event, where it's like, you know, with some disabled people or whatever, a race night, some of the people who weren't deaf, who support the deaf, so, parents, because it was noisy, they were actually signing to each other from a distance. And I thought, that's quite good!
R: So it's useful for anybody in a noisy environment.
Adult 4: You can sign, like, from a distance, it allows you another level of communication in a very busy, noisy environment. I'd never thought of that before.
R: You can chat through a window too.
Adult 4: You can, see! You don't need to…
R: I think an environment like that where everyone is affected by the background noise is quite enlightening: for people who are hearing-impaired, that we can think what that would be like to miss so much of the communication all the time, so… Maybe we want to address some of those challenges, but maybe that's also in what actions we might take later. Is there anything about what might not make us comfortable?
Adult 2: Yeah, the only thing I would say is that there are some people in the choir who really, really do not like the signing, and it would be a shame if that put them off coming back.
Adult 7: I think some of the audience also find it confusing that we're all doing different signs. You know, the sopranos were doing a separate, you know, signing their part
Adult 2: The adjudicator didn't know what we were doing!
Adult 4: [R] mentioned that, you mentioned that [R], that you wish you'd been clearer when you introduced us to say, that we're signing, you're going to see us signing, all at different times, you'll see us
Adult 7: Yeah
Adult 4: And I think, maybe making that clear in the concert
Adult 6: Yeah, and that they were BSL signs, rather than just signs we've made up, or actions we've made up.
Adult 4: And also that we're not doing them all at once because we're not singing all the words at once
Adult 6: Yeah
Adult 4: And it's trying to share with an audience that can't hear the fact that we're doing different parts. And I think to make that just a little clearer to the audience.

Adult 3: That we're signing in parts?
Adult 6: In Three Little Birds, because
Adult 4: We're doing signs at different times, because we're singing at different times. I remember [R] saying to us when we were doing the signing, you said, we're trying to show people that we're doing the different parts. You're trying to show a deaf person or whatever, or we're passing about the different parts, I don't know.
Adult 1: What's Paul's take on that, do you know? I'd be interested to know, about doing different parts at the same time?
R: The BSL choir that I joined with him, we went to a signing weekend, kind of a signing conference, we were the only choir there he got us signing in parts. And we did quite a complex song in 4 or 5 parts. But it was quite clear that that's what we were doing. There was one guy who was standing up doing the double bass, and you could see who was singing what part; signing what part; we weren't singing, we were signing to a track, so we were signing different parts. So it was – I think it's exactly that thing of making it clear why things are different, and how you are trying to demonstrate what the music's doing, rather than make it more confusing. I'll maybe share that video, it's really fun to watch!
Adult 3: Just on the general point about telling the audience. This concert's coming up, I'll just agree it with [R], I'll say a few words about BSL just to give the audience a bit of an understanding as well.
Adult 4: Say we'll be singing different parts, we'll be signing the same words at different times, just as we're singing them at different times.
Adult 3: Yeah, I don't want to say too much in words, people are there to hear songs, but to make folk aware we are doing this signing, presumably why, try to get a sense of the essence of it over without boring the pants off them…
R: Yeah, it's knowing what needs to be said.
Adult 2: And I wonder if there's a way, if there are really people who don't want to sign, if you wanted to do a more complex song, you said if there were a group of people representing each part that could maybe stand separately doing singing and signing, so that takes the pressure off people who don't want to do it, would that be a way round it?
Adult 5: Or a signing group
Adult 4: That's what I'm thinking
Adult 2: Yes, so the people that don't, can sing, and the people that do, it would just [?] them
Adult 6: Yes, and I think that finding a balance… I don't think we should be doing it for every song anyway.
R: No
Adult 2: But it's enough, you know, if there's a couple in each programme, that might be enough to put people off?
Adult 4: If you consider that, like, taking them aside, and the other thing is to think, visually, if you've got, like, you know, people who're signing the perfect range, not everybody, if they're perfect, you know, or if they're random, I think that would look ok as well, I think that would maybe… it would just depend, wouldn't it? Something to consider.
R: Mmm
Adult 2: Just so people have got choices.

R: Yeah
Adult 3: I think that is important. The last thing we want to do is, something [like] signing, for it to be a push some people away because it's not their cup of tea. And I think we'd have to do what's been done, is try it for a few years and just see how it affects us. We're only now becoming aware. You know, in the choir, in general people are enjoying the challenge, but there are I know one or two that aren't really too happy about it, which is the last thing we want.
R: Yeah, yeah.
Adult 3: So, if people just have the simple option there, you know, encourage you to do it, but if you don't that's fine.
Adult 4: I think one of the reasons we're finding it difficult is we're just so unfamiliar with it. You know, in day-to-day life, we don't really come across people signing. So you don't know any of the words.
Adult 1: I think we do specific things for songs that we're doing, Paul's adapted the words to fit the music of the songs we're doing, so I'm not sure how accurate what he's signing would be used in everyday language when you're signing– you know what I mean?
R: Most of them are proper words. That's a dance move, but that's the sign for everything.
Adult 1: Whispering?
R: This is the – that's an interesting one, because the one we use for whisper and for speak is actually the sign for 'sign' so what I've been reading about is that when BSL speakers sign, there's quite a lot of politics around, do you say 'speak', do you say 'sign', do you say 'hear' or what words do you use that are properly inclusive, that would properly reflect that song in BSL? That's a whole other debate.
Adult 4: It's just a lack of familiarity with it, the more familiar we become… there's still people might find the coordination like to do it, and do the signing just doesn't work for them, and they just don't – everybody can try, and if they can't manage it they don't…
R: They don't have to, yeah
Adult 4: They haven't, you haven't been emphatic that you have to sign. I haven't felt that from you
Adult 2: I feel the expectation has been to have everybody signing these songs. Not in a bad way, but that is the expectation.
Adult 4: Expectation, but not the pressure
Adult 1: People don't want to be different
Adult 2: No
Adult 1: So they don't want to say, I'm not doing that.
Adult 2: They might feel uncomfortable.
R: There is that visual thing, you want a choir to look - you want kind of a unified look, so if not everybody's signing, you need a way to make that work.
Adult 5: If [Adult 3] is, for example, going to introduce an element of saying we're going to be trying, we're going to be signing, do we need to qualify that a little bit so, some members of our choir are going to be signing, and we see it's a great idea, or do we want to somehow want to orientate the audience, as well as the choir itself, into the fact that there's no stigma in not doing it, so you could start by saying, we're introducing, we're trying, we're doing something in sign language, to make it, that will make it more

understandable for the audience and we consider the same for saying individual parts will be signed as well so it could look like we're doing different things. All that takes about 15 seconds.
Adult 3: What concerns me is that try to include enough introduction at the concert to say, it's an experiment. That's what we're – I never, I've only thought about it just now. It's experimental, showing that, saying you could include, it's a relatively new thing.
Adult 2: I thought the aim was to try and improve our singing.
Adult.3: Yeah
Adult 2: Getting our message over
Adult 4: I assumed we were doing it to be more inclusive
R: Well, that was my original – that was what drew me to signed singing originally, that it was making it more inclusive, but, the more I got into it, the more I found I was enjoying it, and I feel that it's improved my personal singing and my conducting, because I've been thinking about the conducting and the singing in a different way, because of how the signs express the language. So – there are more reasons to do it, the more I go along.
Adult 4: Have you found that – you look at us all – we don't, we don't look at each other, we just look at you – have you found that we have, that the choir has improved with their signing?
R: I would say, definitely. Going back to the Fife Festival that was one of the most joyful things I've ever seen, was the whole choir doing the Three Little Birds, and everybody's faces were alight, and it was a really lovely thing to see. And I think you sound lovely when you sign too. Maybe because you're not thinking about the singing, but you're thinking about what you're singing about?
Adult 6: There's always been a problem. Not just with our choir, but with all choirs, you used to see it on Songs of Praise on the telly, and things like that, that there's always somebody whose face isn't quite keeping up with the words now, there's always someone who looks grumpy or something, and so it kind of helps with that, I think, and when you watch, when you're sat in the audience and watch the choir, for a while, you start to pick out these people that are kind of looking miserable, or terrified, or something, so it really helps so at least, we're kind of concentrating on smiling, and putting the song across better because of that.
Adult 7: Is that the signing, or is that the fact we're not using music?
R: Maybe both, yeah
Adult 3: I think that a lot of it, not using music means we can really see what [R] is guiding us with
R: So – we've talked quite a lot about the benefits, and the costs and challenges, I think quite a lot of this has come out in what we've already said. What does good signing look like? And as I was saying earlier, you were saying that Paul is so expressive when he signs and a lot of those are what peoples' responses were to the workshop, the comments people made about Paul. So:
Adult 3: I mean, an answer might be nothing, as in it's just so much a part of the communication the audience are just experiencing our expression of the music. It's amplified with this, not necessarily controversial path to take. There's an element of that the audience might not be aware of the fact that we're signing, it's just getting the real soul of the music.
Adult 2: I think we'd want them to be aware we were signing?
Adult 3: Chucked it out there, see what happens

Adult 6: That would be an interesting experiment – we should do a recording not doing the signs – the soundtrack – and then record us with the signs, and then see if they sounded different?
R: That's a very good idea.
Adult 1: Have you ever had any feedback from the audience about the signing?
R: That's one of the things I would like to do more of. The first time that we signed at the Festival, that was not this year, but the previous one, a lot of people came up and said they really enjoyed that we signed. But I haven't ever spoken to people about it at the concerts we've done here, and that's maybe something it would be good to do.
Adult 1: What about, next week at the concert, ask the question, get them to put sticky notes…
R: That's a brilliant plan, yes,
Adult 4: It's a good way to answer, either that, or get them to write it and stick it up, that way you've got a captive audience
Adult 3: You don't get out until…
R: You don't get biscuits and cake without feedback! Before you're allowed to the tea table.
Adult 3: Absolutely. There's lovely cakes, mmm
R: Those Post-its are a really good way
Adult 4: And quick – if it's easy, they'll do it. I think that some people find it a challenge, I do find it a challenge, but I like to dance, so I actually enjoy it. I enjoy learning it. I do. And I feel you get a chance to move with the music. I enjoy doing it. Once I've learnt it, I enjoy doing it. Personally, I feel it's like dancing. Does anyone else enjoy it?
Adult 3: Oh yes, absolutely.
Adult 2: It's interesting though, most people here are pro – it would have been nice if we could have somebody anti.
R: I was hoping that we'd get that.
Adult 2: Someone not so keen on it. But it's tricky, isn't it?
Adult 5: But we know what the anti's say, so the antis are saying it's no use, why bother?
R: Yeah, the thing is, there's maybe two things. The one is that it's extra stuff to remember, and the one is not everybody finds it easy to do two things at the same time, something physical and sing at the same time?
Adult 2: And maybe they don't feel it enhances their singing
R: Yep
Adult 5: That's us. But what about the audience, we're going to orientate the audience, [Adult 3]'s going to introduce it, but I think we need to have maybe a poster somewhere saying we will be using sign language for a number of these songs, just make it look more obvious, what we're doing.
Adult 6: I think getting the balance right with the difficulty of the music, you know, picking the right songs that we don't find too difficult so that if we do a mixture of difficulty, whether we're singing in four parts or singing all together, so probably picking the songs that are simpler, so we get more out of them by doing the signs, than trying to do it – you wouldn't do it in something like The Rose or something
R: No!
Adult 6: That would be really hard to do

Adult 3: Or something like Misty!
(general laughter)
Adult 6: Yeah. So I think where the complexity is low in the singing part
R: That's the best…
Adult 6: It would then make it less boring for us as well, to be doing something else for that.
Adult 1: Something in unison, but done as a canon, or something like that, where we're all signing the same thing, singing the same thing.
Adult 6: Yeah
Adult 1: But you're doing it at different times.
R: That would be fun. You've just reminded me of a song. There's a song that we've done in the signing choir which is about riding on a tandem bicycle. So, that's the sign for a bicycle, that's a tandem.
Adult 4: See, that's good. I like to learn new, it's nice to… it helps me to sign, singing, but understanding the concepts.
R: Yes, yes.
Adult 6: We were in the car – [child's name] and I were in the car, she'd been at the workshop, and we were listening to the Beatles' Help. We were both desperately trying to remember what the signs were from when we did it – yeah, because it's not one that we've done since. Yeah. It would be good remembering it.
R: Yeah, that would be a nice one to bring back. Would it be ok to go on to this one now? So we've talked about audience feedback already. We've talked a bit about, sometimes the signs line up with the words. It's always harder when the order of the signs is different from the order of the words. That was, that came up with the Follow the heron. So I think it's easier when they line up. People said the recordings and videos help, that's something we'll carry on doing.
Adult 3: The videos, definitely. They give you an idea…
Adult 2: And having you signing really helps. And watching you, yeah
Adult 1: Is there any way of putting on the publicity that goes out, 'cos then you may get more people coming in who have got hearing impairments…
R: Yes, we can add that in somewhere.
Adult 1: And there's nothing – is there a hearing-impaired school or anything?
Adult 7: There's a blind school, but I don't know about hearing
Adult 4: That's something for the future, isn't it? We're just starting to, just starting to sign. Well maybe through this guy who did the workshop, he might know people…
Adult 6: I don't think we should be making that our thing.
Adult 4: No, not at the moment, I don't think we're going to get… but it's something for the future if we do more of it?
Adult 2: I'd just like to see what actions…
R: So for the future-
Adult 3: So for actions: again, what possibly what we're all saying now… I think there's a lot to be said for us actually extending this conversation to the entire choir, so that it's, so people... So what we're doing, from my point of view, is we're experimenting and then I think the vast majority of the choir are really enjoying going along with that experiment. It's really useful to discuss that and say, I mean, either, I'm

assuming that your intention is to continue at least having a certain proportion of the songs in our concerts in BSL, whether it's a growing proportion, or a steady proportion or whatever, and also again [Adult 4]'s suggestion that it's clear that it's optional. Members who don't want to sign can…
Adult 4: They can try – well, I think it's good for them to at least try for themselves, but if they don't want to try – and then, coming into a concert, they might be too self-conscious or afraid of doing it? Well, you can see when people are. You can see that signing – you say to us, that sounded really good, but you can say, you signed really well.
R: Yes
Adult 2: I still think we are a singing choir
Many: Yes, yes definitely
Adult 2: We can't lose track of that. And I think the signing helps, but we are a choir…
Adult 6: I think our primary objective has got to be – like, you know, the things we've said, you know, it helps you understand the words, and it helps, you know, it kind of helps make people aware of BSL, and things like that, but I really don't think that we should be using it as a reason to get deaf people to come to our concerts, you know… because I think that's not, that's not the purpose of it. It's not going to get people…
Adult 3: It's something we've been doing for long enough that we do need to have a choir-wide discussion on it, just to…
Adult 2: It's difficult though, because people tend to vote with their feet.
Adult 6: Yeah – I think, I think having one or two songs, as a something different. The same way as – but, you know, I feel uncomfortable when we clap in some of the songs, you know… but we don't do that in all of them, and we don't, you know, we don't have the ukuleles playing in all of them, you know,
Adult 4: It's nice, the variety, isn't it?
Adult 6: because that would again, that would turn the choir into something else, it would be a singing ukulele band or something, and we're not that either, so, you know, we don't all, we don't do all religious songs and we don't do all modern songs, we do a mixture of things…
Adult 4: And it's nice to do that, all different types of music, the introduction talks about, you introduce all the different types of music we're singing, and BSL's an extra layer to that.
Adult 6: Yeah, I guess it's another language, isn't it? And we sing songs in lots of different languages.
R: And we're just adding a language?
Adult 6: If we sang, if we sang three quarters of our songs in…
R: French?
Adult 6: In French, then we'd all get fed up of speaking French, wouldn't we? So – yeah.
Adult 3: D'accord! (Laughter)
Adult 4: I think a couple of points you've brought a few times, is very much: what is the purpose and what is the drive to do this? And maybe that's not even… When I joined the choir, you know, I didn't know… maybe I just thought that's what you did. When I joined the choir, you were already signing those two songs. And I thought it was something you did, you know, I didn't know it was something embryonic or whatever, had just started. So the thing you've mentioned a few times is the purpose and do you intend to actually make

clear both within the choir and then to the audience and also the thing about is the audience and I think their take on it, and thinking about how the audience perceive it?
Adult 2: How the audience assimilate it
Adult 4: I think it's taken some people out of their comfort zone, doing the signing, with that challenge. It's not only a challenge for the individual, but a challenge for you, Sue, to get people to try that and do that. And eh you've done well, managed to get people to actually do it in a concert, and they've actually managed to achieve it, and they should feel proud of themselves for that.
Adult 2: Yeah. At the end of the day, you've got to remember it's a community choir, and people are coming 'cos it's singing, it's supposed to be fun, and do we want it to be stressful? It is getting that balance.
Adult 1: I think, I think people who've said anything to me, on the matter, came to sing, full stop. So there's no sort of idea of doing anything other than singing or playing an instrument, or whatever, just not to sign.
Adult 3: Fair enough.
Adult 7: I think it maybe has taken away time from new music. We seem to have sung the same songs a lot this year. Ah – just, you know, we've sung The Rose about three different concerts this year, we've got the same audience coming every concert. I'm not sure but they'll be beginning to think. It's maybe not the signing,
Adult 1: Not How can I keep from singing, you've never thought that to me
R: Yeah, um – yeah, over the last couple of years, there was a stage when I was doing a lot of new music. And that's a different thing, because I think I was trying to do too much music, and maybe I've gone too far the other way? So..
Adult 1: You have to work with what you've got in front of you, don't you? In terms of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, you know, so..
R: Uhuh, yeah
Adult 6: We've had quite a lot of new people join as well, so the music isn't quite so repetitive for them! Some pieces we think have been around forever…
Adult 4: It's been fabulous, you know what I mean? Like, 'cos I'm new to choir, so it's been good to get the same music and let it drip
Adult 6: There'll be Christmas stuff soon! (Laughter)
R: Yeah! So the thing that's been a bit different the last couple of years is we haven't had a big Christmas concert, where we would have worked on Christmas music, and we've had a big concert early on in the year, and spent the first few months learning stuff for that first concert and it seems a pity not to put that same music into the summer concert, but maybe we must not do that…
Adult 7: A Christmas concert, and then a summer concert?
R: Or maybe we must just not use the same songs. The thing is we perfect them for Fife, and they're so good at Fife, I kind of want to do them like that!
Adult 2: Yeah, I think we did use quite a lot of them in November as well, didn't we?
Adult 7: Yeah
Adult 2: Yeah. Well, the ones we did in Fife, we did in November, and then some others.

Adult 5: Something that had a great impact was watching the [Children's Choir] do it. And they - so the concert with the [Children's Choir)] 'cos the kids were doing it. I want to do that again. And I think that in future in concert we have the [Children's Choir] do the sign language.
Adult 1: Yes, the kids pick up the sign language quicker than the adults!
R: They just do whatever I do! If I conduct, they'll conduct back.
Adult 2: Can you use it in school?
R: I do, I do, yes.
Adult 2: Do you know it's nearly six o'clock? I'm keeping [R] right, 'cos she has a concert to go to…
R: I'm good - we have sort of 5 or 10 minutes to wrap up. In terms of things we're going to do, we're going to see if we can get some audience feedback; we're going to, you and I are going to discuss how we can..
Adult 3: Just what I'm going to say…
R: What, how we're going to express it to the audience in the best way.
Adult 3: The benefit with what we're going to sing, I'll say that, in just a few words.
R: It isn't something I want to stop doing, because I think it is useful in terms of the communication and the singing. I think there are benefits for the singing – but maybe we look for songs that are less demanding vocally so that we can not be stretching everybody, and also make sure everybody knows they've got the option. And everything we've ever done, wherever there's been feedback, for every song, somebody hates it, and it's somebody's favourite.
Adult 7: You can't please everybody all the time!
Adult 6: Ah, the tea! Every committee meeting, every time, every year, we discuss whether we should have a tea break or not, and there's always 50% of the choir really like the tea break, and 50% of the choir really hate the tea break
R: Yep!
Adult 3: And in the blue corner… (Laughter)
Adult 6: Democracy doesn't work…
R: Our choir's not a democracy!
Adult 4: Something that – in terms of like speaking to the choir about it, you could ask them like… how did you feel when we started doing it, and how do you feel now? Do you feel you've improved, do you feel you've enjoyed it? What do you feel, or do you feel you've just not enjoyed it, you've never enjoyed it?
Adult 2: We have feedback every year, we do try and encourage people to do feedback at the end of the term, and it's anonymous as well
R, Adult 6: Yes
Adult 2: So there is that option to do that.
Adult 3: I think there's a benefit in that 'cos – I don't know about [R] - I think some of chorus feel that they might want to express it privately; so doing anonymous feedback is the way to do it
Adult 6: I think because you have this – because you're doing this project, and you're doing this, I think I wouldn't go too hard on looking for feedback on the signing, as part of the kind of general feedback of the choir, 'cos that almost puts it in a special category as something to be sort of grumped about, or kind of praised by us, you know, it is just one of the languages in which we sing, when we sing lots of songs in different languages, it's just a small part of what we do, so I think I wouldn't put too much emphasis on it.

Adult 4: So no news is good news!
Adult 6: Yeah. Because, yeah, there are people who then would, you know…
Adult 4: Who would use it as an opportunity…
Adult 6: Yeah, and I think, like [Adult 2] says, it shouldn't be the focus of our singing choir.
Adult 4: It has to be subtle, if it's too heartfelt, or it's become intrusive or been introduced to more songs, or, you know... I never felt that people round about me were uncomfortable with it.
Adult 6: We artificially give it more – kind of concentrate on it more, because it's something we have been talking about, because of, you know, the study and things as well, so -
Adult 5: We just don't want to make a thing about, about people who are not doing it, that's the point, someone who just doesn't want to do it, so if that's. I can sit down, and, 'cos if I can't stand, and we have one other person who likes to sit – and does anyone complain? I hope not –
R: No!
Adult 5: It's that same level, just don't make an issue of it.
Adult 3: Before, what I was going to say is I must admit I wasn't conscious of it, for certain, I've kind of drawn some kudos for being able to slip into the conversation about what we do, being inclusive kind of choir, because we do sign language for some of our songs, we are reaching out to a wider audience, but it turns out that's a form of boasting, I wasn't aware I was doing it, but it's simply what it was, you know "Our choir are doing sign language" this, I hasten to add, is with friends that sing in other choirs, not just general, random members of the public. So, see what you've done [R]!
R: Is there anything you wanted to add?
Adult 6: What??
R: No, I was just going to go round and see if…
Adult 6: Oh right, I thought you were singling me out!
R: No, sorry, you're just at the end of the row!
Adult 6: No, I don't think so
Adult 7: No, I think we've covered most of it
Adult 1: No, good discussion.
Adult 5: More, please!
Adult 3: Yes, what he said.
R: Well, thank you all very, very much for giving up your Friday afternoon, I think that's been really useful.
Adult 2: It's Sunday
R: What did I say, Friday?
Adult 6: Wish it was Friday! (Laughter)
END OF FOCUS GROUP

R: So – if you write on there any words that you know…

Child 1: Of course I know my favourite sign!

R: … in sign language. You know lots! Yes – so put that down…

Child 1: Like "turtle" and "octopus"

R: Yep! So put those in… you can write them or draw a picture, either.

Child 1: I'm not good at drawing pictures. But I might do…

R: But you're very good at writing

Child 1: No, I am good at drawing pictures, but not of a turtle

R: That is quite hard to draw. So you're going to write "turtle"?

Child 1: Oh, actually I am good at drawing... ah, too late. "T"

R: It's a u next… then r… t.. l… e…

Child 1: Wait, is this on, like, every week?

R: No, it's a once only thing.

Child 1: Oh.

R: Are you going to draw an octopus, or write "octopus"? 'Cos you can write some and draw some. And you can change colour as well if you like. That's a lovely octopus.

Child 1: It only has seven feet!

R: Maybe the eighth one is hiding at the back

Child 1: It's not a very good octopus.

R: Well, I can see what it is. That's good.

Child 1: Is…

R: You're going to write it as well? Cool Then I can see what it is. Right. What else do you like?

Child 1: What's that?

R: It might just be a door banging in the wind. The only other person here is your mum. Are there any other words you know?

Child 1: Maybe another person just arrived, quite late.

R: It could be.

Child 1: Yes. But

R: But then they'd be here by now. Do you want to…

Child 1: I don't know another one.

R: Well, think about the songs we've done in sign language. What's this?

Child 1: "Fish"?

R: Yep, you know that one. And…

Child 1: "Rainbow"?

R: Yeah. Cool. And one of my favourites is this one. What's this one for?

Child 1: I don't know.

R: You don't know what that one is?

Child 1: "Magic"?

R: “Magic”! Yes. Ok – m – a -g – I – c. What song is this?
Child 1: That was, (singing) “Why are there so many songs about rainbows?”
R: Yep! There’s another one we did…
Child 1: “Birds”!
R: Yes! You know “birds”, put “birds” in.
Child 1: (singing) “Three little birds”
R: Oops, sorry! Got your hands all green.
Child 1: Which way does a “b” go? Does it go…
R: That way.
Child 1: Oh – so the other way?
R: The other way. I – r – d – s. Birds. I always have to think which way the “s”es go. Yep. Right, let’s – where’s my other piece of paper?
Child 1: There!
R: The one that says, “What do we think” I need to finish my sentence, we’ll move that, and we can get it back if we want it.
Child 1: There, light green!
R: It says “What do we think about when we’re signing”. “What do we think about when we’re signing”. When you’re singing and signing a song, what do you think? Are you actually just concentrating very hard, or are you thinking about other stuff?
Child 1: Well, I’m sometimes thinking about other stuff?
R: Are you?
Child 1: Yeah.
R: What kind of things? So, the last time you were signing a song was probably when we did it with the (name removed) choir. Remember that? What were you thinking about when you were singing?
Child 1: I was the only one. In our class. Who did it.
R: You were. You were. You did really well. You sang well and you did the signs well. Did you like being on that big stage?
Child 1:Mmhm!
R: Was it scary?
Child 1: No!
R: No! And what did you think about while you were singing and doing the signs for the rainbow connection?
Child 1: I don’t remember. I don’t really remember.
R: No?
Child 1: Why does it just say “30 30 30 30 30 30 30 30 30”? (Pointing at banner)
R: I’m guessing it was the thirtieth anniversary of something. And the other one says “Fair Trade, so it must be 30 years of Fair Trade somewhere, maybe? Or 30 days? Or 30 minutes? What do you think?
Child 1: Whee! I don’t know!
R: So if you sing a little bit of “The Rainbow Connection” – do you want to sing a little bit with me now?
Child 1: Mmhm

R: Ok. So we'll sing the chorus, that's a nice easy bit to sign…
Both: "Someday we'll find it, the rainbow connection, the lovers, the dreamers and me. La-de-da-dee-da-da-dum. La-da-da-dee-da-dee-da-doo!"
R: That's lovely! So can you think about something else as well as doing the singing and the signing? I don't think I can, but maybe you can.
Child 1: Nothing else…
R: It's quite a lot to do already. Is it easier to just sing it without doing the signs, or is it…
Child 1: It's easier to do it without signing the signs.
R: Yeah? What about the "Three little birds" one?
Child 1:It's still easier to just..
R: To do it without?
Child 1: Yeah.
R: Yeah. So…
Child 1: Whee! Ow.
R: Are you all right?
Child 1: Yeah.
R: You nearly did the whole splits there.
Child 1: I nearly did. Is that supposed to be a tree?
R: That's just a line. "Nothing else". "What do you think about when you are signing?" "Nothing else", and it says "easier just to sing". Do you like doing sign language?
Child 1: Yeah. One Can I draw this as a tree? Can I make this a tree?
R: You can make it a tree, of course.
Child 1: Whee!
R: Needs a trunk, doesn't it?
Child 1: Whee!
R: So if it's easier just to sing, why do you like signing?
Child 1: I don't know! I just like it!
R: I like it too.
Child 1: I think it's fun.
R: Yeah? What colour shall we write "fun"?
Child 1: What colour – oh. Yellow.
R: Yellow for "fun". Do you want to write "fun", or shall I write "fun? You write "fun".
Child 1: I want to write it, inside a sun.
R: A sun of "fun"! I like that.
Child 1: Yeah.
R: A "fun" sun.
Child 1: Fun!!!!
R: What's your favourite song we've done in sign language?
Child 1: I don't know!
R: What songs have we done? We've done "Three little birds".

Child 1: Rainbow Connection, probably, is my favourite.
R: Rainbow Connection
Child 1: Yes
R: You like that song anyway, don't you? It's a good song. Let's make it yellow. And then we did the elephant one as well.
Child 1: Yeah. (Singing) "There once was an elephant, oh but he was elegant, dressed in his best with a big bow tie, playing on the piano going hammer, hammer, hammer"
Both: "And the audience all went "Ooh!"
R: They're all quite fun, aren't they? Right – red colours for the question. Um – "How do you after you sing?" We might need a new piece of paper.
Child 1: I don't know!
R: Don't know! How did you feel after we sang for the (name removed) choir?
Child 1: Mm. I think I felt good and happy that we did it. I felt good, and I felt happy that I did it.
R: Excellent!
Child 1: Red we want! Green! A tree again!
R: And – would it be different if we didn't do the sign language?
Child1: Yes, it would be different!
R: I think we need a new piece of paper. Can I take this tree away? Um – "How is it different" shall we do it green again, 'cos the tree's top, "when we sing and sign?" Well, it would be different. Is it more fun or less fun?
Child1: Probably it would be less fun.
R: Without the signs, or with the signs? Without?
Child1: Without.
R: More fun with signs -in orange.
Child1: (Stamping sounds) I do not know what I was doing!
R: I do not know what you were doing either! Um. Right. I'm going to cheat. I'm going to make this tree go at the top of the hill, and at the bottom of the tree, I'll have another tree that says, "Should we learn more songs with signs?" "Should we learn more songs," it's going to be a small tree, "with sign language?"
Child1: That's wide! It's a wide tree, but small.
R: It's a short, wide tree, yeah. Would you like to do more songs with sign language?
Child1: Yes.
R: What colour is "yes"? There are some colours we haven't had yet, but we can use the same colours again.
Child1: Probably light blue.
R: Right, shall I write "yes" and you can do the tree trunk.
Child1: Whee!
R: Right, then – we need one other page. And this one says…
Child1: (Singing)
R: Right, I'm going to go dark blue this time. "Would it be useful – when would it be useful to know some sign language?"

Child1: Hm. Wait, for everyone?

R: For everyone.

Child1: Oh. If somebody couldn't really, like, talk, but they wanted to communicate with other people, they could use their hands to sign with.

R: That's a beautiful answer.

Child1: Whee! This is fun. It feels like there's much more space without all of the chairs out.

R: When would you be able to tell all your friends something in sign language?

Child1: What did you say?

R: When would it be fun to speak in sign language, like with your friends?

Child1: I dunno! I do not know!

R: Let me see if I can remember what you said just now, that was a really good answer. Luckily we're recording it anyway. If somebody couldn't talk, but they wanted to communicate?

Child1: Yeah.I know what I'm going to do when I get home!

R: What are you going to do?

Child1: What I'm going to do is get a black pen, then draw eyes on my hand, big eyes, and then I'm going to do a big smile, so it's a funny hand! Funny!

R: Right! Do you think there's any other questions about sign language and signs that we should think about, or have we got most of them down?

Child1: I think we've got most of them

R: Shall we have a biscuit?

Child1: Yep!

R: Thank you very much!

END OF FOCUS GROUP

Signing Club Focus Group, Date: 29 May 2025

R: So, the first thing I thought we would do is spend just five minutes – you can draw or write any signs that you know in sign language. They could be from songs we know – yes, that's one! Do you want me to write it on for you? Shall I write "rat"?
Child A: Yes, "rat"!
R: We know "rat" because that's someone's favourite word.
Child A: M!
Child B: Is this "whispering"?
Child A: Or like "softly"?
R: It actually means "sign" and we did a small one for "whisper" and a big one for "speak". It's "speak in sign language"
Child A: You can't forget "dream"
R: "Dream", that's a good one. I'm going to put this a little closer to you. Ooh – what's that? "Turtle"
Child C: Wait…
Child A: I think most of us know the majority of the alphabet, so...
Child B: I don't, 'cos I wasn't here the first week.
R: We can go back and do the alphabet. I'll put the alphabet…
Child B: What's "blackcurrant"?
Child C: And also a weird one – what's "blackcurrant" in sign language?
R: I have to confess I don't know!
Child B: And wasn't it like…
R: "Rainbow" – I can't do "rainbow" in black, I need a colour. "Rainbow"…
Child A: And then like, wasn't this like "wisdom", when did this across your…
R: Yes, that's right. "Wisdom"…
Child C: Was this "Thank you"?
Child A: Yeah. "Please to your knees" and then "thank you" is a shorter one
R: Same sign
Child B and C: "Jellyfish"!
R: Thank you – "jellyfish".
Child A: We used this big piece of paper for deciding what was going to be on our class playlist.
R: Oh, did you? It's fun, isn't it?
Child C: What??
Child A: We had a playlist of songs
R: What other songs… Think about the songs we've done…
Child A: Yeah, that's what I'm going through… Wasn't it like Mother Someone comes to me?
R: Mother Mary
Child A: And it was like "darkness"?
R: "In my hour of darkness"?
Child A: Yeah, like that.

Child C: “Shark”!

R: Yes, “shark”!

Child C: Is this “m”?

R: Yes, that’s right. And if you do it twice, that’s for “mother”.

Child A: Ah. That’s another one we know then.

Child C: “Whale”!

Child B: I almost got “whale”

R: Ooh yes – “in my hour of darkness”

Child B: What’s this one?

Child C: R… R…what’s…

Child A: Is this like “breeze”, or is it a dance move?

R: That one is “connection”

Child C: R, what’s your favourite sign?

R: Mine? I’ve got a few favourites. I like “dream”, did I write “dream”? And you said “whale”, didn’t you Child C? And I also like “angel”.

Child A: Ah yeah, that’s quite cool. I think, I actually know a few more, because we did, like, the Bible, we did something to do with the Bible, and we were learning that. This is “library” or “books”.

R: Oh ok, like the books of the Bible.

Child A: The Old, the New Testament is this one, that’s the New Testament, and the Old…

R: That’s the word for “new”, yeah.

Child A: Yeah, and then “old”, or “old Testament” is this one.

Child C: Have you got “turtle”?

Child B: “Dog”.

R: “Dog”, yes. Do you remember how to sign, “How are you?”

All: No

Child A: Ah yeah! I think you showed us that.

Child B: “Heartbroken”!

R: “Heartbroken”

Child C: We have a very big variety!

R: Yeah, lots of different things!

Child B: We have many sea animals!

R: Yeah, we’ve been playing a game that involves a lot of sea animals. Do you know what an “oyster” is?

Child A: Was that the one like – yeah, that one.

R: Yes, that’s an oyster.

Child A: What was “making”, I feel like “making” was like that…

R: Oh, that’s from “Moon River”, “dream” “maker”.

Child A: It’s so annoying, ‘cos I feel like I know loads, and, like, it’s just gone out of my brain?

R: Yes

Child B: It’s really annoying because…

Child A: Is that like “sight” or “see”?

R: “See”
Child B: It’s really annoying because I know some, but then they just go out of your brain…
Child A: As soon as you’re asked for them…
Child C: I know!
Child A: I’m using all my brain power here, my last two brain cells…
R: Oh! There’s one song we haven’t got any of the signs from, that’s “Three Little Birds”. Yeah, that’s “birds”!
Child A: Was this “message”?
Child B: Is this like “rise up”?
R: That’s “sunrise”, yeah.
All singing: “Stared at the rising sun. Three little birds pitched on my doorstep, singing sweet songs”
R: Right, we’ll leave that for now and go onto the other questions, otherwise we’ll run out of lunchtime. Ok, the next question is, “What do you think about while you’re signing a song?” Like, while you’re signing, what’s happening in your brain?
Child A: I have like a skill, ‘cos I also speak Mandarin, so how I remember to write things is make, like, what they’d be similar to in English, so, like, “dream” would be like “do rubbing”, I’d just think “do rubbing” it just kind of goes on in my head like, do similar actions.
R: Right, so, like find an action to the word?
Child A: Mmhm. Also, like, link words a bit, so like “connection” I think of “link” and it would, that’s what it would mean to me.
R: Yes, a lot of them look like the word that they belong to.
Child C: Wait, we didn’t do, like, that one.
R: What’s that one?
Child B: “Connection”?
R: That one’s “connection”, that one is?
Child C: “Agree”!
R: That’s right, “agree”! I’ll put that one on there. And that one means… “complete”.
Child C: And then…
Child A: And that was “continue”?
R: That’s right, “continue”. What do you think about when you’re signing a song? So, if you imagine you’re doing…
Child A: “Wind turbine”!
Child B: When I’m singing a song, I mainly think of the signs, ‘cos I have to remember them.
R: So you can’t really think about other stuff? You have to think about the signs?
Child B: No. And it’s quite hard because learning it from not ever really speaking it is quite hard to remember.
Child A: Yes, and sometimes you imagine, like, someone actually doing it, it could be like, you just imagine a person doing it.
Child B: Yeah
Child A: Yeah, really that’s all that goes through my head.

R: Yeah, it doesn't really leave much space for other stuff, does it? Right – and how do you feel at the end of a song, when you've signed a whole song?
Child A: I feel very proud, I feel very proud because I've done all of these, like, singing and things, and you've managed to do it well, signing. Also it's quite fun, because…
Child B: I feel quite relieved, in a way, that I've finished, with my brain working really hard to remember it.
Child A: Yeah, 'cos your last two brain cells are now relieved.
Child C: I kind of feel, like, joyful!
R: Joyful?
Child C: And feeling happy, because I've done it?
Child B: This is kind of like Child C's, I feel like good, just knowing that I've got it done?
R: So it's like a sense of achievement?
All: Yeah
Child A: Plus you also learn new things on the way, so the first thing that goes through my head when I finish is the new signs I like. So if I like learn – like "dream" was one of those, when I did "dream", all I could think about was the "dream" symbol, the sign, it's quite fun learning all the new ones.
Child C: Sometimes I do signs that I know, and then my parents have to try and guess them! I make them try to guess them.
Child A: My mum probably taught me them.
Child C: What's "pudding"?
R: "Pudding"? I will have to find out, I don't know!
Child C: 'Cos I really want to be like candy cam…
R: There's one for "cake", I think the one for cake looks something like this…
Child B: That would be like it probably…
Child A: I can imagine that
R: Something like that for pudding. Right, the next big question is, "How is it different signing a song from just singing along to a song?"
Child A: I think because more thought goes into it, to think what you need to do – 'cos normally when you're singing, you'll move your hand unconsciously, to help your voice, but now you can't do that 'cos now you're signing, so there's a lot goes through your brain.
Child B: I feel like it's a lot, this is kinda like what you said, it's a lot more thingy because…
R: What sort of "thingy"?
Child A: Brain power!
Child B: Yeah! Because when you're singing, you have to remember the words, but when you're signing and also singing, you have to remember lots more, including the words and the signs.
Child A: Especially when you're learning a new song, so it's quite helpful to have people around you helping you.
Child B: Can I go to the toilet?
R: Yeah, of course.
Child C: Where did Child B go?
R: To the toilet.

Child C: Can I go too then?
R: Yes
Child A: Was does everyone suddenly remember they need to go to the toilet when someone else goes to the toilet?
Child C: I dunno! I just sometimes remember…
Child A: Just forget you need to go to the toilet! The toilets are on this side of the… This is madness!
R: Right, let's have a look at the next one while we're waiting for them to come back. "What makes a song easy to learn?" What songs are easier than others to learn?
Child A: Probably the songs that aren't as dense, as in lots of lyrics put together, 'cos then you've got to simplify, like use less, and obviously then it stops making sense if you just use less and less symbols.
R: Paul, the man who taught me to sign, says less is more when you're signing, you actually get more over if you use less signs.
Child A: Yeah.
Child A: Also songs that use less names, maybe, most names, like unusual names need spellings, 'cos there's not a sign for every single name, so your fingers could get very tired, so…
R: So if you're spelling lots of names – so if you're going to put someone's name in a song, use a short name, an easy name!
Child A: Because my friend's mum works in a place where they use sign language, a school, so she has to spell most people's names, so if she gets you in trouble, she has to sign it, the whole name.
R: Yeah, you don't want to say their nickname if they're in trouble!
Child A: Also, having someone who knows the song makes it easier as well, or knowing the song, and having someone help you, makes it a lot easier.
R: Child C, did you want to say something about how it's different from singing a song, when we sign it?
Child C: I feel like you have to really think about it, but when you sing sometimes, if you hear the music, it actually with signing, it's quite similar, because when you hear part of the music, then you remember what to do.
R: That's right.
Child A: Yeah, like you have a brainwave.
R: The music reminds you what comes next.
Child A: Even just listening to it once you'll know. Ah, if it's the end of break, I'll have to go downstairs.
R: Is it raining?
Child C: The wind's so strong it's blowing your sister and some of the girls to one side of the bench!
Child A: Welcome to Scotland guys…
R: One minute sunshine, the next minute rain. Right – "When would BSL be useful in everyday life?" You've probably got some good examples.
Child A: Yeah.
Child B: I could trick my parents
R: Yes, you could trick your parents. You could gossip with your friends. Like a secret language.
Child B: It can also be useful if you're speaking to someone who only speaks in signs, just knowing some of it could be really, really, really useful.

Child A: Yeah, ‘cos it opens up a whole lot of more people you can talk too. Like, obviously, what I said I want to do…
R: Say again, because that was before I pressed record – what do you want to do?
Child A: So I want to do – if people are studying for tests and things, a tutor that signs, so you can help if you know sign language – now it’s gone out of my head, the description! So you can do sign language to help people…
R: Like being a translator in a university, or something like that?
Child A: Yes! So, being a translator for sign language.
Child C: It could help you get a job. If you want to be a teacher, sometimes teachers have to know sign language, because sometimes they have students who use sign language.
R: Yeah, there’s lots of situations where somebody who only speaks sign language could do with somebody who knows how to sign.
Child A: Let me check the time, I need to go home early, because I’m getting picked up in three minutes.
R: Have you got any other ideas I can pop on there?
Child A: Any other ideas? Well, all I know is I really enjoy doing it.
R: That’s a good one.
Child B: It’s quite an achieving sense in your body, just like knowing you’ve achieved that is quite impactful!
Child A: It’s a new skill. It’s a life skill, like riding a bike, or going skiing, because it’s so useful in so many ways. And you can never really forget it.
Child C: L has forgotten about it, she’s outside!
R: Oh, in the rain!
Child C: We’re in here just keeping dry, listening to all their sighs!
R: Thanks very much for all your help. (Child A leaves) I’m going to ask you another question about this one. If you and your friends could speak sign language, when would it be really useful?
Child B: It would be really useful – say you were in a competition or something, it would be quite useful to say it in signs, so no-one else can hear you.
R: Competitive edge.
Child C: Or when you’re eating? When you can’t say it out loud.
R: You know what’s quite cool, is when you’re somewhere noisy like the dining hall? You could talk to someone on the other side.
Child C: You could be like (signs “I love you”) wait, is this “love”?
R: There are lots of “loves” – that’s “love”, that’s “love”, you can also say “I love you” like that… lots of them
Child B: You could say this – signs “I love turtles”
Child C: Or “I love whales” or “I love Mum” or “I love dogs”
Child B: What’s the sign for “horses”?
R: There’s a couple. The one I remember is like you’re riding a horse, like this.
Child C: What’s the sign for “otter”?
R: I will go and look that up. I do not know. That would be a good sign to know.
Child B: I want to know!

Child C: My favourite animals are turtles, otters and foxes. Now I need to know the signs for otters and foxes.

R: I'll have to look them up for you. Well – well done! Shall we stop there?

END OF FOCUS GROUP

Appendix 8: Taguette-generated highlights

Theme 1: Why would a deaf person attend a choral concert?

Taguette highlights: Why would a deaf person...

accentuating the music

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Why would a deaf person...

trying to make the music itself more accessible too.

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

can't, still couldn't quite understand why somebody who's profoundly deaf would pay fifty pounds to go to the Usher Hall to see a Mozart concert

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

travel holidays for blind people

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

"I might want to go to the Taj Mahal, and even though I can't see it, I might want somebody to stand next to me while I'm there, and kind of smell it, and hear it, and somebody describe it to me

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

inclusion

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

if you've got a group of friends and every time they go to a music concert, and you feel that you can't go 'cos you can't hear, you're missing out, so if you've got a way of going where you can get something from the music, even if you can't hear it in the traditional sense, that's going to make you feel included, isn't it?

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person...

he's made a whole business out of like um travel for blind people,

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:

Why would a deaf person...
he emoted with signing, and I thought, that's clever stuff
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Why would a deaf person...
could I ask the question, as you did, why would a deaf
person want to go to an orchestral concert, and the answer
is, inclusion and to make it worth taking in with the senses
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...
they can experience music with five senses, they can
experience music in different ways, through vibrations in a
vague way. So if you have someone signing to enhance that,
then that increases their understanding of what's being
performed, and their enjoyment.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...
experiencing music with all your senses
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...
the guy who's doing the translation for signing is also
translating the music,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Why a hearing choir?
you're using non-verbal signs to us and people can see that
from behind, it's always very interesting at a classical
concert to see that, and it's just maybe someone facing the
concert, facing the audience doing that at the concert, I
don't know, you know, would maybe help
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...sometimes what I'm doing as a conductor is telling the
audience where to look: this is where the exciting thing's
going to happen, it's not just about making those people
sing, sometimes I'm saying, this is the interesting bit, listen
over here.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...
if you go see a choir that's very formal and don't move, how
you get a different experience from a choir that is moving
around, and maybe dressed in different colours, so it isn't
just the hearing.

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person...
the signing brings that expression,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Why would a deaf person...
we did quite a complex song in 4 or 5 parts. But it was quite
clear that that's what we were doing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is good signed song?, Why would a deaf person...,
Challenges, Action plan
trying to demonstrate what the music's doing, rather than
make it more confusing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, What is good signed song?, Why
would a deaf person...
fun to watch!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is good signed song?, Why would a deaf person...
that was what drew me to signed singing originally, that it
was making it more inclusive
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Why would a deaf person...
Is there any way of putting on the publicity that goes out
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Action plan

Theme 2: Connecting music, movement and meaning

Taguette highlights: Connecting music, movement and meaning

feel like I'm telling the story
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, What is BSL like?, Connecting music,
movement and meaning
extension to the words
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning, What is BSL like?
more meaning

Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is BSL like?, Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music,
movement and meaning
nice and rounded and smooth
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is BSL
like?, Why a hearing choir? feels like a dance.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is BSL like?, Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music,
movement and meaning
when you understand what the signing means, it helps you,
it reminds you about the words as well
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning
helps with the singing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning
The signs give you the words,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing
choir?
exhilaration
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
Meaning you haven’t messed up the words and you haven’t messed
up the signing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning
accentuating the music
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning, Why would a deaf person...
trying to make the music itself more accessible too.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement
and meaning
can be good for hearing people too, because it makes you

see the music in a different way.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing
choir?
he emoted with signing, and I thought, that's clever stuff
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why would a
deaf person..., Why a hearing choir? they can experience music with five senses, they can
experience music in different ways, through vibrations in a
vague way. So if you have someone signing to enhance that,
then that increases their understanding of what's being
performed, and their enjoyment.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why would a
deaf person...
experiencing music with all your senses
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement
and meaning
the guy who's doing the translation for signing is also
translating the music,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Why a hearing choir?,
Connecting music, movement and meaning
you're using non-verbal signs to us and people can see that
from behind, it's always very interesting at a classical
concert to see that, and it's just maybe someone facing the
concert, facing the audience doing that at the concert, I
don't know, you know, would maybe help
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement
and meaning sometimes what I'm doing as a conductor is telling the
audience where to look: this is where the exciting thing's
going to happen, it's not just about making those people
sing, sometimes I'm saying, this is the interesting bit, listen
over here.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement
and meaning
You were talking about all five senses, and I'm just thinking

about how we were in our black, and how much better a response, and how much more relaxed we are with our different colours
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning
it extends the level of connection, it's not just the pitch, the volume, the expression from your face, it's a whole new layer of communication from the body.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
if you're signing, you have to be looking out, you can't use music, so just by that you're communicating with your face
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and Meaning the signing brings that expression,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
feels quite dance-y for me, it's nice to move.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and meaning
use of physicality
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
physical movements and the signing, all that, helps you with the rhythm
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
syncopated rhythm or something it can be easier if you think about moving.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and Meaning mutually supportive, you know, the words and the signing, the movement, they reinforce each other.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good

signed song?, Why a hearing choir?
I've never come across anyone so communicative in my life, even his little pinky was telling me something! Just his facial expressions - his body language was just phenomenal
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good signed song?
trying to demonstrate what the music's doing, rather than make it more confusing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?, Why would a deaf person..., What is good signed song?
fun to watch!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why would a deaf person..., Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good signed song?
make it more understandable for the audience
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good signed song?, Action plan
try and improve our singing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
Getting our message over
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and meaning
there's always somebody whose face isn't quite keeping up with the words now, there's always someone who looks grumpy or something, and so it kind of helps with that, I think,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is good signed song?, Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
concentrating on smiling, and putting the song across better because of that
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is good signed song?, Connecting music, movement

and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
Paul is so expressive when he signs
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is BSL like?, What is good signed song?
it's just so much a part of the communication the audience are just experiencing our expression of the music. It's amplified with this,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is BSL like?, Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good signed song?
getting the real soul of the music.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is good signed song?, Connecting music, movement and meaning
Once I've learnt it, I enjoy doing it.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
I feel it's like dancing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing choir?
it helps you understand the words
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and meaning
I think it is useful in terms of the communication and the singing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is good signed song?, Why a hearing choir?, Action plan, Connecting music, movement and meaning
find an action to the word?
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Connecting music, movement and meaning, What is good signed song?, What is BSL like?
Child A: Yes, and sometimes you imagine, like, someone actually doing it, it could be like, you just imagine a person doing it.
Child B: Yeah

Child A: Yeah, really that's all that goes through my head.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is BSL like?, Challenges, What is good signed song?,
Connecting music, movement and meaning
when you hear part of the music, then you remember what
to do.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning, Why a hearing
choir?, What is good signed song?
all I know is I really enjoy doing it.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Connecting music, movement and
meaning
feel like I'm telling the story
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning
extension to the words
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning
feels like a dance
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning
when you understand what the signing means, it helps you,
it reminds you about the words as well.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning helps with the singing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning
signs give you the words
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts 2.docx Tags:
Connecting music, movement and meaning

Theme 3: Challenges of singing and signing

Taguette highlights: Challenges

my coordination is not as good as it could be, so actually
getting the words and the movements together is tricky
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges

challenge
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
hard at first
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
initially tricky
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
really challenging to do two things at once.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges it's a lot to remember.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
some of the older people. They're finding it very difficult to
do signing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
it's hard!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
It's not necessarily an age thing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
dyspraxic,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
when I'm trying to do it when we're singing in parts, and I'm
trying to remember the note, my part and when I come in.
and do the motions, I just find that really hard
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges I have to really concentrate on making my body do what it
needs to do.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
It's tricky
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
I can't concentrate on more things at the same time
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:

Challenges
I don’t think it’s a level playing field for everybody, learning
the signs and the words, I mean, for age or, you know,
disability,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
there are some people in the choir who really, really do not
like the signing, and it would be a shame if that put them off
coming back
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges some of the audience also find it confusing that we’re all
doing different signs.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
adjudicator didn’t know what we were doing!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
you wish you’d been clearer when you introduced us to say,
that we’re signing,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges, Action plan
they were BSL signs, rather than just signs we’ve made up,
or actions we’ve made up
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges, Action plan
trying to share with an audience that can’t hear the fact
that we’re doing different parts
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Challenges
trying to show people that we’re doing the different parts.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges
we did quite a complex song in 4 or 5 parts. But it was quite
clear that that’s what we were doing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges, What is good signed song?, Why would a deaf
person..., Action plan
one or two that aren’t really too happy about it,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Challenges

one of the reasons we're finding it difficult is we're just so unfamiliar with it
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
I think that some people find it a challenge, I do find it a challenge
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
the antis are saying it's no use, why bother?
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges extra stuff to remember
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
not everybody finds it easy to do two things at the same time, something physical and sing at the same time?
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
they don't feel it enhances their singing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
taken some people out of their comfort zone, doing the signing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Why a hearing choir?
people who've said anything to me, on the matter, came to sing, full stop
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
it maybe has taken away time from new music
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Action plan We artificially give it more – kind of concentrate on it more, because it's something we have been talking about, because of, you know, the study and things as well, so -
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan, Challenges
I've kind of drawn some kudos for being able to slip into the conversation about what we do, being inclusive kind of choir, because we do sign language for some of our songs, we are reaching out to a wider audience, but it turns out that's a form of boasting, I wasn't aware I was doing it, but

it’s simply what it was, you know “Our choir are doing sign language” this, I hasten to add, is with friends that sing in other choirs, not just general, random members of the public. So, see what you’ve done R!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Why a hearing choir?
It’s easier to do it without signing the signs.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges
When I’m singing a song, I mainly think of the signs, ‘cos I have to remember them
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, What is good signed song? So you can’t really think about other stuff? You have to think about the signs?
Child B: No. And it’s quite hard because learning it from not ever really speaking it is quite hard to remember
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, What is good signed song?
Child A: Yes, and sometimes you imagine, like, someone actually doing it, it could be like, you just imagine a person doing it.
Child B: Yeah
Child A: Yeah, really that’s all that goes through my head.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is BSL like?, Challenges, What is good signed song?
there’s a lot goes through your brain.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Why a hearing choir?
when you’re singing, you have to remember the words, but when you’re signing and also singing, you have to remember lots more, including the words and the signs.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Challenges, What is good signed song?I feel like you have to really think about it,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Challenges, What is good signed song?

Taguette highlights: Action plan

I don’t think that us doing it as our choir, though, it’s going to suddenly increase our audience, by a whole lot of profoundly deaf people are going to start wanting to come to our concerts. I don’t think, you know, I don’t think that’s what we’re doing it for.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan

education for people who do come to our concerts,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Action plan

let people do it in a relaxed environment
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan

haven’t put pressure on us to achieve it 100 percent, that means you are a bit more relaxed.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan

seeing someone who uses it all the time, being able to get little tips from him. And he made it fun.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: What is BSL like?, What is good signed song?, Action plan, Why a hearing choir?

you wish you’d been clearer when you introduced us to say, that we’re signing,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Action plan

making that clear in the concert
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan

they were BSL signs, rather than just signs we’ve made up, or actions we’ve made up
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Action plan

trying to share with an audience that can’t hear the fact that we’re doing different parts
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Challenges, Action plan

we did quite a complex song in 4 or 5 parts. But it was quite
clear that that's what we were doing.Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, What is good signed song?, Why would a deaf
person..., Challenges
group of people representing each part that could maybe
stand separately doing singing and signing, so that takes
the pressure off people who don't want to do it,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
finding a balance
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
I don't think we should be doing it for every song anyway.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
people have got choices.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
make it more understandable for the audience
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Why a hearing choir?, What is good signed
song? we should do a recording not doing the signs – the
soundtrack – and then record us with the signs, and then
see if they sounded different
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
feedback from the audience about the signing
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
next week at the concert, ask the question
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
Post-its are a really good way
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
we're going to orientate the audience
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
getting the balance right with the difficulty of the music
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:

Action plan, What is good signed song? where the complexity is low in the singing part
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, What is good signed song?
Something in unison, but done as a canon
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
recordings and videos help
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
Is there any way of putting on the publicity that goes out
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Why would a deaf person...
extending this conversation to the entire choir,
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Why a hearing choir?, Action plan
we're experimenting and then I think the vast majority of
the choir are really enjoying going along with that
experiment
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is BSL like?, Why a hearing choir?, Action plan a certain proportion of the songs in our concerts in BSL
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
t's clear that it's optional
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
you can say, you signed really well
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
I still think we are a singing choir
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
I really don't think that we should be using it as a reason to
get deaf people to come to our concerts, you know…
because I think that's not, that's not the purpose of it
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
we do need to have a choir-wide discussion on it
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action planI think, I think having one or two songs, as a something

different
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
we do a mixture of things
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
you introduce all the different types of music we're singing,
and BSL's an extra layer to that.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Why a hearing choir?
it's another language, isn't it?
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Why a hearing choir?, What is BSL like?
the purpose and do you intend to actually make clear both
within the choir and then to the audience
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
it's supposed to be fun, and do we want it to be stressful? It
is getting that balance.Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is good signed song?, Action plan
it maybe has taken away time from new music
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Challenges
in future in concert we have the [children's choir] do the sign
language.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
What is good signed song?, Action plan
we're going to see if we can get some audience feedback;
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan
I think it is useful in terms of the communication and the
singing.
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan, Why a hearing choir?, What is good signed
song?
look for songs that are less demanding vocally
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan make sure everybody knows they've got the option
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags:
Action plan

it is just one of the languages in which we sing, when we sing lots of songs in different languages
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Action plan
We artificially give it more – kind of concentrate on it more, because it's something we have been talking about, because of, you know, the study and things as well, so -
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan, Challenges
More, please!
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Action plan
it's quite helpful to have people around you helping you
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, Action plan
It could help you get a job
Document: Module 3 Focus group transcripts.docx Tags: Why a hearing choir?, What is BSL like?, Action plan

Appendix 9: Consent Forms

Consent Forms – Adult Choir

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Adult 1) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@amail.com

Signature of research, participant (redacted)t

Signature of participant Date 11/5/25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in tris study

Signature of researcher Date 12/5|25

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

I (Adult 2) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 11/05/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 12/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Adult 3) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• i understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• i understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of participant (Redacted)

Date 11/5/25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 12/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

•, I (Adult 4) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that al information I provide for this study wil be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 18 May 25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 18/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Adult 5) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 18/5/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 18/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Adult 6) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which al identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 18/5/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

1 believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 18/5/2025.

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I .. Adult 7 voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.
• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.
• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies
• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.
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• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)
Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant

Redacted 6 May 2025

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Redacted

Signature of researcher D 18 May 2025

Consent Forms – Children's Choir (Parents)

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Parent 1) voluntarily agree to my chid participating in this research study.
• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time.
• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.
• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.
• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.
• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.
• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.
• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.
• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies
• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.
• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree
• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree
• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)
Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant's parent or guardian (Redacted)
Signature of parent or guardian Date 16/05/25
Signature of researcher (Redacted)
I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study
Signature of researcher Date 26/5/25

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Parent 2) voluntarily agree to my child participating in this research study.
• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time.
• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.
• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.
• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.
• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.
• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.
• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.
• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.
• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.
• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.
• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.
• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)
Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant's parent or guardian (Redacted)
Signature of parent or guardian Date 16/5/25
Signature of researcher (Redacted)
I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study
Signature of researcher Date 26/5/25

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Parent 3) voluntarily agree to my child participating in this research study.
• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time.
• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.
• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.
• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.
• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.
• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.
• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.
• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.
• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.
• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.
• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.
• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)
Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com
Signature of research participant's parent or guardian (Redacted)
Signature of parent or guardian Date 16/5/25
Signature of researcher (Redacted)
I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study
Signature of researcher Date 26/5/25

Consent Forms – Children's Choir (Member)

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Child 1) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can stop or leave at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that quotations from the focus group without any identifying details may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be kept for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 26/5/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 26/5/2025

Consent Forms – Signing Club (Parents)

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Parent A) voluntarily agree to my chid participating in this research.

• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmaii.com

Signature of research participant's parent or guardian

Signature of parent or guardian Date 27/5/25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 29/5/25

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

•I (Parent B) voluntarily agree to my child participating in this research study.

• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time

• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant's parent or guardian (Redacted)

Signature of parent or guardian Date 15/5/25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 29/5/2025.

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

I (Parent C) voluntarily agree to my child participating in this research study.

• I understand that even if my child agrees to participate now, they can withdraw at any time.

• I understand that they can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. My child will hear the same information before filling in the form and before the focus group.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information my child provides for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child's identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my child's name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal their identity or the identity of people they speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if my child informs the researcher that they or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with my child first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant's parent or guardian (Redacted)

Signature of parent or guardian Date 26 May 25

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant's parent or guardian is giving informed consent for their child to participate in this study.

Signature of researcher Date 29 May 2025.

Consent Forms – Signing Club (Members)

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Child A) understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can stop or leave at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that quotations from the focus group without any identifying details may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be kept for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 29/5/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 29/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

I (Child B) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can stop or leave at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that quotations from the focus group without any identifying details may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be kept for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 29/5/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 29/5/2025

Consent to take part in research: Understanding signed song in choirs

• I (Child C) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can stop or leave at any time.

• I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.

• I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

• I understand that participation involves a short initial form and a focus group.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to the focus group being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that quotations from the focus group without any identifying details may be quoted in the researcher's written assignment and other assignments within the researcher's master's studies.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without permission.

• I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's laptop until the researcher receives confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that a transcript of the focus group in which all identifying information has been removed will be kept for two years following confirmation of the master's degree.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Susan McPhail (BSc (Hons), Dip ABRSM)

Email: susan.mcphail@gmail.com

Signature of research participant (Redacted)

Signature of participant Date 29/05/2025

Signature of researcher (Redacted)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date 29/05/2025

Appendix 10: Ethical Approval

RESEARCH STUDENTS This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course. Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk). This document is also available in Welsh.
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Susan Barbara McPhail			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	Susan.mcphail@gmail.com

6	Contact Telephone Number:	07500381377
	For students:	
7	Student Number:	2333178
8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel/Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		**YES**	☒	**NO**	☐
					Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee		☐		
		Institute Research Committee		☐		
		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative		☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3	*[List any other relevant documents here]*	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	What is the response of participants in my choirs to signed singing?		
2	Proposed start date:	31 March 2025	Proposed end date:	16 September 2025
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below:** *Purpose of Research Activity* *Proposed Research Question* *Aims of Research Activity* *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
3	**Purpose of Research Activity** The purpose of this research is to obtain a broad perspective on the response of my adult and children's choirs to singing and signing. Traditionally signed singing has been the domain of deaf and hearing-impaired performers, but this study intends to explore potential benefits to hearing singers. The research should produce a plan for the future use of signed singing within the participating groups. While there is existing research into gesture in music, there is very little on signed singing and it is hoped that this study may raise interest in future research in this field. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	**Research Question** What is the response of adults and children in my choirs to signing while singing, and are there benefits to be gained? (this box should expand as you type)			
5	**Aims of Research Activity** Understand how signed singing is experienced by my adult and children's choirs			

	(this box should expand as you type)
6	**Objectives of Research Activity** 1. Discover benefits as perceived by the participants 2. Discover disadvantages as perceived by the participants 3. Identify elements of a successful signed song 4. Identify any learning in communication: BSL signs to express feelings, general vocabulary 5. Would the participants like to carry on learning signed songs? 6. How can we improve the sessions? 7. Which groups find them most beneficial? (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Research will follow a qualitative action research methodology. 1. Literature review 2. Preliminary open-ended questionnaire to provide themes for focus groups 3. Focus group for members of adult and children's community choirs to discuss the experience of signing while singing 4. Reflective Journal to document my research process, any observations and questions that arise for me, commentary on the research process, the way the process evolves and any changes in my perceptions of the experience as the project progresses (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	Queensferry Parish Church Hall, The Loan, South Queensferry EH30 9NS Queensferry Primary School, Burgess Rd, Queensferry, South Queensferry EH30 9NX My teaching studio at my home in South Queensferry Online literature research (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	No research will be conducted outside of the UK *(this box should expand as you type)*

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	**YES**	**NO**
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒

14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: Literature review, researcher's reflective journal (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☒	☐
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	Adult choir – focus group of up to 10 from within choir of 40 members by general invitation Children's choir – focus group of up to 10 from within choir up to 20 members by general invitation Children's school club – focus group of up to 10 from within club of up to 25 members by general invitation (participation voluntary within these groups) *(this box should expand as you type)*

11	Who will the participants be?	Members of my local community choir, local children's choir and school signing song club *(this box should expand as you type)*
12	How will you identify the participants?	As the participants are already known to me, I will contact them in person or using email addresses I currently use to communicate with them. Participants will be given a unique identifier in transcripts of the focus groups. This identifier will be listed only once, in a password protected file. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	A smartphone voice recorder will be used to record the focus group sessions. A laptop will be used to transcribe the recording. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☒
		No	☒
2	**Risks to participants** For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: 1. Singing with others expresses our internal feelings so there is a risk of exposing private thoughts and feelings. 2. Participants may not enjoy the activity and feel their time has been wasted. 3. Participants may feel let down if they do enjoy the activity and the project comes to an end. 4. Participants may feel pressured into answering as they feel the researcher expects, as there is an inherent power imbalance in the choir leader/ 1. choir member relationship. They may feel their answers will impact negatively on the relationship. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to participants:* 1. The adult participants already sing in the choir and have developed a community of support within the group. They know they can leave at any time if they need space or feel uncomfortable. They also have recourse to the committee or the musical director if they wish to raise an issue. The children's group also know that they can stop at any time if they wish, and can speak to the leader or assistant if they have concerns. Their guardians and parents are also able to raise any issues that arise. 2. At the start of the research, the nature of the activity and the aims of the research should be communicated to participants. It will be reiterated that participation is voluntary and can stop at any time, 3. The nature of the project is such that we will be able to continue if participants are keen to do so. 4. At the start of the research that it does not affect their relationship with the choir leader and that their honest answers are valued. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	There is no intention to raise sensitive or embarrassing topics in the group. If any such disclosure arises, it should be dealt with sensitively, bearing in mind that anything with child protection implications would have to be disclosed to the child safety officer at the church or the school. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

4	**Risks to the investigator** For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: There is always a potential risk that a situation may arise that threatens the investigator's physical or emotional safety, for instance if a group member discloses disturbing information or becomes upset or angry. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:* The atmosphere of the focus groups should ideally be calm, friendly and collaborative. If a situation arises where the investigator feels unsafe, it may be appropriate to end the session. If the content of the discussion becomes disturbing, the investigator should attempt to steer the discussion into calmer territory, or if necessary halt the discussion. Disturbing incidents should be followed up appropriately, through the child protection officer in the case of the school or as appropriate to the situation for adults. *(this box should expand as you type)*
5	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: 1. The research does not meet the ethical standards expected of the university as laid out in the university research policy document. 2. Participants are negatively affected by the research and complain to the university *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the University:* 1. All research will be carefully considered, approached in a sensitive and methodical way, under the guidance of my supervisors. 2. The rights of the participants to have control over their participation should be safeguarded. *(this box should expand as you type)*
6	**Environmental risks** For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: Damage to church or school equipment, excess noise *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to environment:* Activities take place at a time when noise will not disturb nearby residents. Participants will be encouraged to respect each other and the teaching environment. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	3000 0000 0327 5354		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?

	One product of the focus groups will be an agreed plan for any future signed singing activity. This will be fed back to the choirs at the conclusion of the research. All participants, or their guardians, will be given the researcher's email address for any subsequent enquiries. *(this box should expand as you type)*
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Adult community choir: The aims and objectives of the research, and the way the research will be conducted, will be shared with the choir ahead of the research, both by email and in person. Sign-up will be voluntary and consent forms collected from those who wish to participate, making it clear that participation can be halted at any time and describing the anonymised data to be collected. Children's groups: Parental or carer consent will be requested by email, along with similar information about the nature of participation and data collection. In addition, children participating will be asked to sign a consent form themselves. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	The questionnaires will not capture any personal data. The product of the focus groups should be flipchart sheets with collaboratively agreed general points on the pros and cons of signed singing, and what is important to each group going forward. A transcript of the recordings of the focus groups will anonymise the participants, and the audio recordings will be deleted once the transcripts and notes have been made. The research will not name the groups or locations involved. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	**YES**	**NO**
1	***"Personal data"*** *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	The focus groups will be recorded so that the discussion can be analysed for the purposes of the research. The resulting transcripts will be anonymised. Once transcripts have been made, the original audio recordings will be deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
3	***"Special category data"*** *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,*	☐	☒

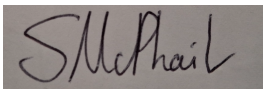
	(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*		
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	*(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	**YES**	**NO**
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Audio files will not be stored except from on the smartphone used to make the recording. Data will be transcribed in an anonymised form for analysis. The transcription and the analysis will be shared with the researcher’s supervisors and backed up to a memory stick. The original audio recordings will be deleted once transcripts have been made. Password protection will be in place for the laptop and the stored files of data. Manual files will be kept securely in the researcher’s office, and shredded on completion of their Masters studies. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒

21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the researcher's Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used for data transfer or storage will be password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. All data will be kept for the duration of the researcher's Masters studies, and deleted afterwards. In accordance with DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see all data kept relating to them and have the right to ask for this to be deleted at any stage, in which case it will not be used in the project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Tutors at the Voice Study Centre, university moderator *(this box should expand as you type)*		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Sue McPhail *(this box should expand as you type)*		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the researcher's Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used for data transfer or storage will be password protected, and will be reformatted to destroy the data on completion of the researcher's Masters studies. All data will be kept for the duration of the researcher's Masters studies, and deleted afterwards. The audio recordings will be deleted once the transcriptions have been made. All manual files will be shredded on completion of the researcher's Masters studies. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	No *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES**	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	**Signature of applicant:**		**Date: 16/2/2025**

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	**Date: 9.4.25**
3	Signature:	Laura James	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE **ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY
Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendix 11: Self-Permission Letter

Sue McPhail (MD)
23 Ashburnham Road
South Queensferry
EH30 9JL
16/2/2025

Dear UWTSD,

Re: What is the response to participants in my choirs to signed singing?

I confirm that I approve of the research on the response of community choirs for which Sue McPhail is Musical Director to British Sign Language signed singing by Sue McPhail from 31 March to 16 August 2025.

Regards,
Sue McPhail

Appendix 12: Disclosure Clearance for working with young people

Re: Disclosure result shared with you

Thursday 27 Feb at 11:30
Hello Susan,
Thank you for your quick response. This is perfect thank you.
Warmest wishes,
Tracy Theobald
Tracy Theobald (She/Her)
Assistant Director
Head of Student Support and Admissions
Hi Tracy,
To: **Tracy Theobald** |
Tracy@voicestudycentre.com
Thursday 27 Feb at
11:22
This is a link to view my Disclosure result digitally - is this sufficient? It can be used once only. I will request a paper copy as well, but this may take more time to arrive.
Regards,
Sue

Application result

Susan Barbara McPhail shared their disclosure application result with you.
Select the link below to view the result:
account.disclosure.scot/befor...91Gxrg
You have 14 days from this email to view the result.
You'll need to enter the applicant's date of birth and application referencenumber to view the result.
Once you view the result you cannot access it again.
[OFFICIAL]
This email and any files transmitted with it may be confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom they are addressed. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.