






# WELLBEING SCORES

## SECONDARY SCHOOL CASE STUDY

**The session increased the wellbeing of all the pupils observed. Impact ranged from 40% to 250% increases in wellbeing. The lower a pupil's wellbeing, the greater the positive impact the session had.**

### METHODOLOGY

Whilst the Youth Music scales are used for start-end points of the project, many other things can influence the scores over the period and knowing exactly what the project can claim credit for is complicated. For this session, to learn more about the very specific impact of the activity on pupils' wellbeing, the ArtsObs<sup>1</sup> wellbeing scale was used. Developed by Royal College of Music and Chelsea & Westminster Hospital it combines a 7-point observational scale, with adjectives and emoticons to illustrate the score in more detailed; and guidance is given for annotating the scores with contextual information. Two benefits which make the tool especially appropriate in this context is that it is non-invasive on the pupils' experience, and cuts through language barriers.

						
1 (visibly expressed)	2 (moderate)	3 (mild)	4 (neutral / unresponsive)	5 (mild)	6 (moderate)	7 (visibly expressed)
<b>Angry</b>	<b>Frustrated</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Calm</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Excited</b>
Depressed	Restless	Bored	Reserved	Focused	Receptive	Delighted
Aggressive	Anxious	Listless	Quiet	Alert	Entertained	Appreciative
Distressed	Irritated	Tense	Still	Relaxed	Interested	Enthusiastic
Hostile	Upset	Distracted	Passive	Content	Amused	Friendly

Within the group, a sample of 4 students were observed closely, across a mix of ages, genders, ethnicities, backgrounds, time in the country, and levels of happiness on a day to day basis. Scores were taken around every 5-10 minutes, with accompanying notes explaining the activity and delivery by the musicians and any environmental issues of the space or other important factors. Taking scores throughout the session have an opportunity to show how the musical delivery affected the young people's mood, with minimum external factors influencing the results.

Conversations with the school's lead contact for the project were held before the workshop to understand some background context for a selection of pupils, and again at the end to check assumptions and observations made during the evaluator's evaluation.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cwplus.org.uk/archive%20folder/research/arts-research/artsobservational/>  
Sally Fort, 2019

At this North London secondary school, the project supports a cohort of around 20 pupils from all year groups at the school, who learn together throughout the full school timetable. The group is for pupils in their first 12 months of arriving in the country (with one exception, who has been in the group longer).



The workshop began with warm up name, vocalisation, and group dynamics games to mix the group up, channel the energy of the students, introduce and revisit new vocabulary, and create the mood for the rest of the session.



Next the group revisit some Italian lyrics they have worked with before. Some pupils including **G** help interpret the words and correct the phrasing. Some are starting to pick the song up phonetically, while others are slower but tap feet and hands, click their fingers or dance in their seat. Students are encouraged to express the language of lyrics through movement, following the lead of one

younger boy who is a natural. As the rest of the group hold back, facilitator Anna tries framing the music as a rap battle and invites pupils to sing a call and response arrangement in teams facing off against one another. One girl, **N**, steps forward. She and Anna set an example for the rest of the group as to how to bring their energy and attitude to the moment. Slowly the rest of the group join in and the pace and volume builds. Finally, the energy is where the facilitators want the students to be, and the activity ends with lots of laughter.



The next activity involves learning parts of a song in Arabic. Since none of the facilitators are Arabic speakers, it takes a while for everyone to understand what to sing, and which students will sing which parts. The group is then divided into two teams: those who speak Arabic, and those who don't. The split is equal. One boy, **H**, has been with the cohort for longer than a year so knows some of the music already.

He proudly tries to lead some of the singing. He knows the words but his timing is often out of sync, though if anyone notices, it doesn't show. The Arabic speaking pupils seem to gel as a group much more so than the other team, and work well in unison.



Another boy, J, has looked restless and downhearted throughout the session. He sits out for a while but later re-joins and appears much calmer. He is asked to play a drum to keep the rhythm of the singing constant, and instantly looks much more relaxed and engaged. He smiles and is a natural, playing and experimenting with his role. For the first time in the session he looks out into the room and smiles. He follows facilitator Anna's lead, watching closely for changes of direction and tempo. Perfectly in sync, he stops at the exact moment she does. The responsibility has worked well. Anna asks the group a question and he instantly shoots up his hand to respond, excitedly.



The group return to the Arabic song and try again to agree on how it should be phrased and structured. Something has disrupted the unison of the Arabic speaking students and they explain that the dialect being used isn't right for everyone. A conversation takes place between some students and musicians to find a way through and most reach a consensus, though one girl is clearly upset, as if she feels she hasn't been heard. Perhaps she feels distanced from her culture in the moment.



When the final activity takes over, the upset girl snaps back into the positive energy again as the pupils are asked to stand up. She starts to sing, sway and clap and looks focussed and relaxed. The group sense the end of the session is close and start to become distracted. Those who listen closely hear about next week's activity and are excited again on their way out looking forward to what's to come.

OUTCOMES

1. **The session increased the wellbeing of all the pupils observed, no matter what their starting point.** Impact ranged from 40% to 250% increases in wellbeing.
2. **The lower a pupil’s wellbeing, the greater the positive impact the session had.** These pupils showed the greatest % increase in their scores throughout the session (and vice versa).

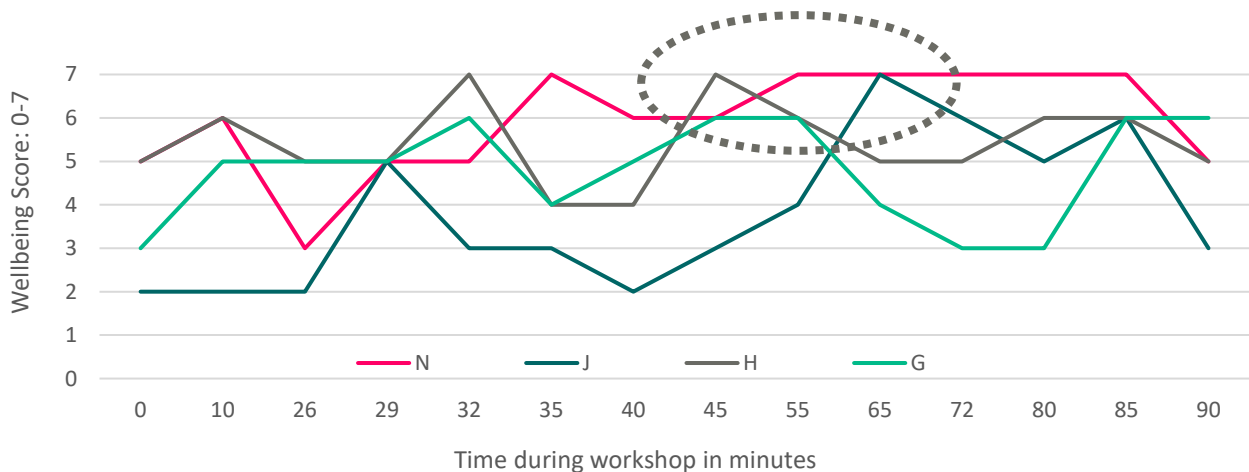
WELLBEING SCORES OF THE FOUR STUDENTS

<i>Student</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>G</i>
<i>Average score across whole workshop, out of 7</i>	6.1	3.8	5.4	4.8
<i>Start-End scores</i>	5-5	2-3	5-5	3-6
<i>Start-End % increase in wellbeing</i>	0%	50%	0%	100%
<i>Lowest-Highest scores</i>	5-7	2-7	4-7	3-6
<i>% increase in wellbeing</i>	40%	250%	75%	100%

WELLBEING JOURNEYS OF THE FOUR STUDENTS

The circle on the chart below shows a shared high point around an hour in, at which time J has just started his new drumming role; N is leading the singing and is dancing happily, H is enjoying being a part of the newly formed Arabic speaking team, and G is laughing with a friend. The energy is good, everyone has a purpose and clear direction. Those who can take on responsibility or leadership, do so.

*Scores throughout the workshop: circle highlights shared peak of wellbeing*



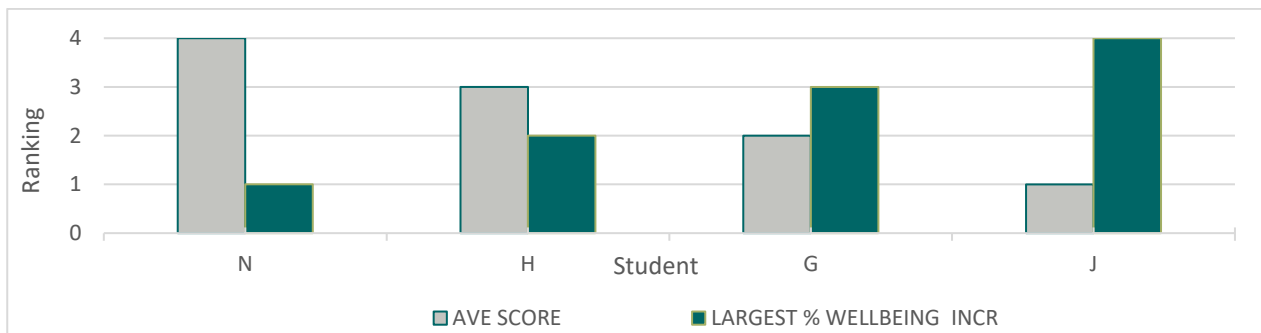
The value of measuring progress throughout a single session is clear:

- N's starting and ending scores remained the same. Alone, this would imply no change took place. However, her scores throughout the session and accompanying adjectives show a clear difference throughout the session, leading to an over 40% increase in her wellbeing.
- J, who had an especially difficult morning, increased by 1 point according to start and end scores, but overall the session made a difference of 5 points looking at the difference between the lowest and highest scores monitored throughout.

Another important point to make, is that general mood shown in the session doesn't represent the difference made:

- N's average wellbeing score was the highest, and her word cloud the most positive. The increase in her wellbeing was 40% - a good score.
- J's average score was the lowest and his word cloud shows the difficulty he was going through that morning. It would be easy to assume the session had no impact on his wellbeing. However, the monitoring throughout the session enables us to see his wellbeing was eventually lifted by an amazing 250%, and this elevation was sustained relatively well for the last half hour of the session.

This chart shows that in fact, those who have the lowest average score, benefit the most. (The same is also true if we looked at those with lowest starting scores).



## N'S EXPERIENCE

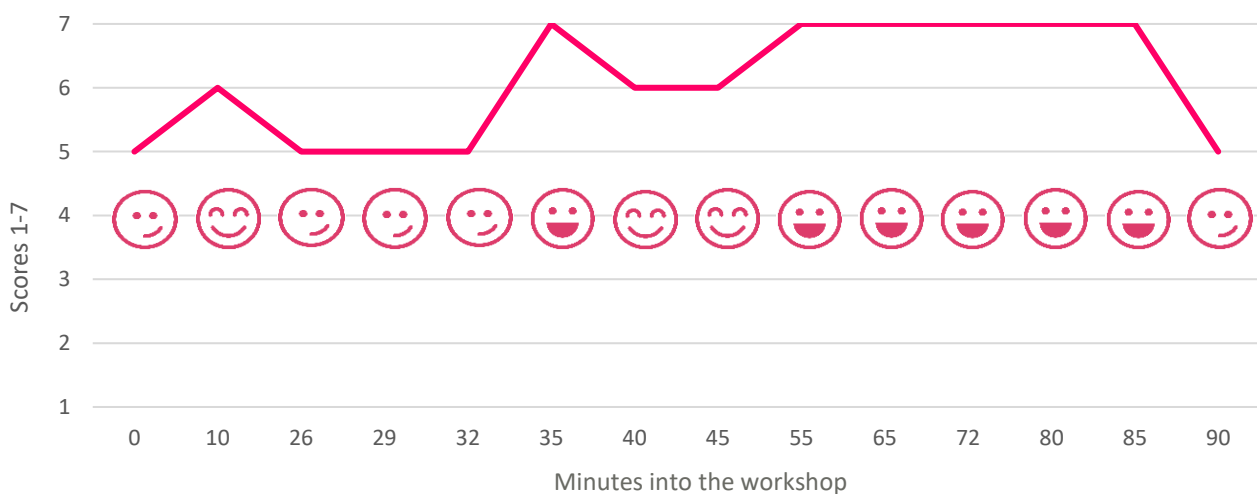
N is a Year 9 girl originally from Syria. She is generally a happy and friendly student.

Below is the chart of N's Artsobs scores from 1-7 and accompanying facial expression chart. To the right is the word cloud of the adjective accompanying each score.



- N's scores moved from 5 at the lowest, to 7 at the highest; **a wellbeing increase of 40%.**
- Her average score across the whole session was 6.1 out of 7.
- The high of the session for N was throughout the second half where she experienced consistently complete immersion and enjoyment.
- The teacher emphasised that although N is generally upbeat these workshops move her natural personality up some extra gears to be '**where she is most herself**'.

Wellbeing scores throughout the session



N was vibrant and very immersed at almost all times. She contributed actively, with enthusiasm and, at times, leadership. The observation scores echo this with high, often maximum, scores except for a dip, where N was disengaged because of language barriers where a song was being translated between English and Italian.

N speaks little English and no Italian so she struggled to follow the flow of the activity. This was temporary, and she soon picked straight back up again.

## J'S EXPERIENCE

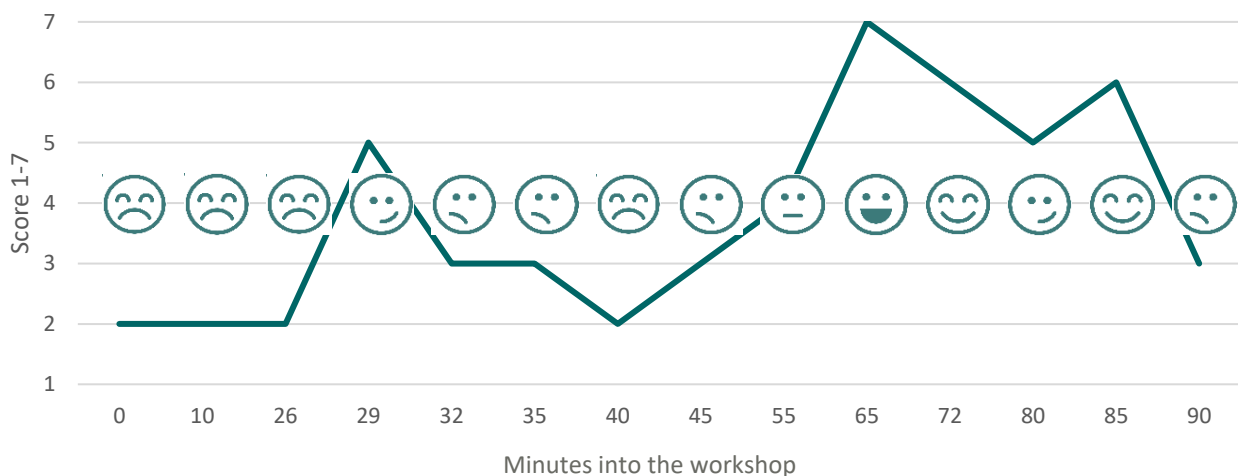
J is from Somali though raised mostly in Germany until recently arriving in the UK.

He is a quiet young man, often distanced from school life and his peers, though lively when his guard is down. The word cloud of adjectives accompanying his scores illustrate his persona poignantly.



- J's wellbeing scores improved from 2 to 7 at his peak: **a wellbeing increase of 250%**
- His average score across the whole session was 3.8 out of 7
- The high for J was an hour in, when he became drummer and keeper of the tempo
- **Despite the lowest starting and average score, J experienced the greatest increase in wellbeing**

*Wellbeing scores throughout the session*



J was having a difficult morning and was very disengaged for the first half of the session, mostly looking at the floor, not joining in, fidgeting anxiously with his hands or feet. For a while he sat out completely. After a chat with the teacher he eventually re-joined and seemed calmer. He took to the drum sitting unused and from that point on changed his engagement completely. Though still not confident with singing, he became fully immersed musically, playing, experimenting, participating in conversations and activities. He began to smile and laugh and chat to his neighbouring students. The change was retained for almost half an hour, only disappearing again when the session came to an end.

## H'S EXPERIENCE

H is from the Bedoon in Kuwait and arrived in the UK just over a year ago.

Conversations with the teacher and musicians confirmed what the adjectives illustrating each score also show. In general H is enthusiastic and keen to join in, and sometimes to try and lead.



- H's scores moved from 4 at the lowest, to 7 at the highest; a wellbeing increase of 75%.
- His average score across the whole session was 5.4 out of 7
- H's wellbeing was high throughout most of the workshop, with quick dips being the exception to the rule

*Wellbeing scores throughout the session*



H was generally keen to participate and joined in confidently when he knew what was being asked of him or the group. He liked to sing, often moved his hands and feet along with the music and tried to lead with some of the singing when he could, because of knowing the songs from the year before. Facilitators say he is often out of time musically, though this didn't seem to be noticeable to him and if other students were aware they didn't show it. On occasion, he side stepped in time to the music. At times he wasn't sure what was happening, sometimes due to language barriers, sometimes due to the facilitators needing a quick discussion about next steps leaving the group waiting for instruction. In these unsure moments his demeanour became noticeably still and confused. The transition between his moods seemed instantaneous and the downs, which were few compared to the ups, could go as quickly as they came.



## G'S EXPERIENCE

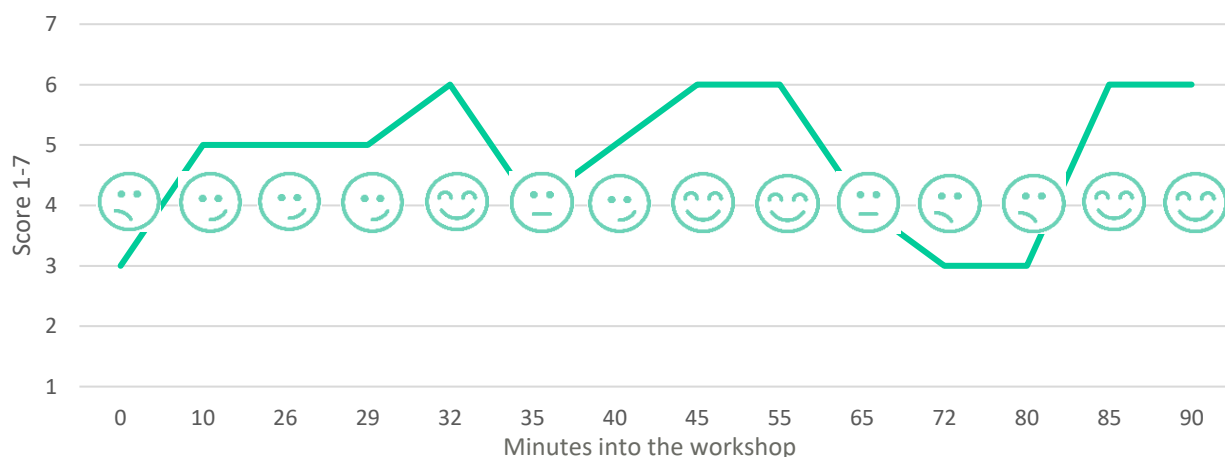
G arrived in the UK from Brazil and has a stronger grasp of English language than a lot of the other pupils in the group.

The word cloud of adjectives accompanying G's wellbeing scores hint at this, showing her to be largely distracted but with potential glimmers of a brighter self rising to the surface at times



- G's scores moved from 3 to 6, a wellbeing increase of 100%
- Her average score across the whole session was 4.8
- G's wellbeing and engagement levels fluctuated though her emotions appeared positive more often than they did negative or neutral.

### Wellbeing scores throughout the session



Much of the time G appears disengaged, uncomfortable. When seated, she looks outwards from the circle of students rather than in towards everyone else. She pulls her sleeves down over her hands and looks at her feet. At other times she's also keen to join in, offering to take a turn in the middle of the circle, but then freezing when it's her go; offering suggestions when the group are discussing what to do next; focussing hard on the words on the board and mouthing them silently as if trying to fix them into her brain. She moves back and forth between joining in – relaxed, smiling, laughing, swaying and clicking; and discomfort or awkwardness. It appears she wants to enjoy herself but something is stopping her switch off from distractions and fully immerse herself. Language barriers are a part of it, and she looks far less confident when standing up to join in physically, but there seems to be something more. The teacher later explains G wasn't her usual self today and is normally more animated. Today she was tired and in pain.

The general spirit of the room and most students was relatively upbeat most of the time.

What worked especially well was ensuring all students knew what was being asked of them, enabling them to take responsibility or a leadership role when possible, and listening to and acknowledging everyone's contribution. Supporting different sensory / communication preferences also helped.

At times engagement dropped. Some individuals clearly had external issues detracting from their full engagement which facilitators can't resolve. However, there were also times when some of or all the group disengaged. To be clear these were few, and the facilitators were extremely able in their delivery and facilitation. What can be improved, to minimise these moments even more, are a few specific actions which will help remove fear, and sustain momentum and immersion:

1. **PROVIDE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES:** Ensure all participants always have clear direction. If a discussion needs to take place about how to deliver the next few minutes of the session, or how to arrange a musical segment, set pupils a clear task or challenge to keep their energy, momentum and focus sustained in that time.
2. **PRESERVE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS DURING FACILITATOR CONVERSATIONS:** Keep musical energy going throughout facilitator discussions. This can be linked to the recommendation above, but it has been noticeable in other MAI projects that having a drum continuing in these moments keeps the group within their flow, rather than breaking the spell and having to rebuild their immersion all over again. Indeed, J's experience in this session was another good example of how a simple drum can secure ongoing engagement and immersion and his drumming did keep the group involved on occasions their focus might otherwise have drifted off.
3. **DEVELOP MORE MULTI-SENSORY ENGAGEMENT.** Some students felt uncomfortable singing but engaged really well when there were other options such as movement or playing an instrument. Building multi-sensory opportunities to join in, especially when the key activity is singing sitting down, will help fully engage pupils who are less confident vocalists so they can build up their strength of self and voice. This is not to suggest some participants won't sing - eventually, just that more support which better suits other sensory needs could help them get there sooner and more confidently.