

Music Education in Aged Care: Positive Ageing through Instrumental Music Learning

Authors : Ellina Zipman

Abstract : This research investigates the place of music education in aged care facilities through the implementation of a program of regular piano lessons for residents. Using a qualitative case study methodology, the research explores aged care residents' experiences in learning to play the piano. Since the aged care homes are unlikely places for formal learning and since older adults, especially in residential care, are not considered likely candidates for learning, this research opens the door for innovative and transformative thinking about where and to whom educational programs can be delivered. By addressing the educational needs of residents in aged care facilities, this research fills the gap in the literature. The research took place in Australia in two of Melbourne's residential aged care facilities, engaging two residents (a nonagenarian female and an octogenarian male) to participate in 12-months weekly individual piano lessons. The data was collected through video recording of lessons, observations, interviews, emails, and a reflective journal. Data analysis was done using Nvivo and hard copy analysis with identifications of themes. The case studies revealed that passion for music was a major driver in participants' motivation to engage in a long-term piano lessons program. This participation led to experiences of positive emotions, positive attitude, successes and challenges, the exercise of control, maintaining and building new relationships, improved self-confidence through autonomy and independent skills development, and discovering new identities through finding a new purpose and new roles in life. Speaking through participants' voices, this research project demonstrates the importance of music education for older adults and hopes to influence transformation in the residential aged care sector.

Keywords : adult music education, quality of life, passion, positive ageing, wellbeing

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