



Developing a Handbook for Therapeutic Choirs through Practice-Based Action Research

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Context



This practitioner action research focuses on the facilitation of two neurological choirs, the CeleBRation Choir¹ and Sing Up Rodney². Members are adults and older people with neurogenic communication difficulties resulting from conditions such as stroke, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, or dementia. While I bring a music therapy lens to this research, my findings will be relevant to the broader interprofessional field of singing for wellbeing.

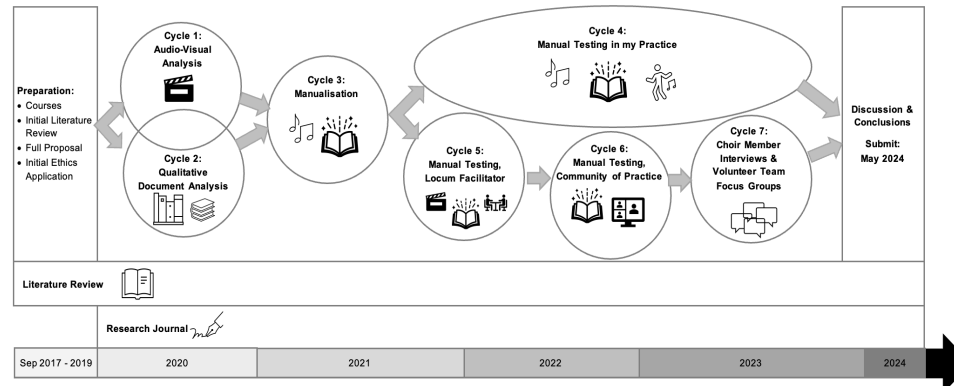
Research Questions



Ethics

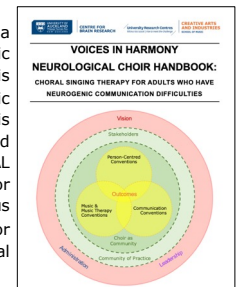
Study approval was given by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Ref: UAHPEC20511).

Research Design and Timeline



Dissemination

The main research output is a handbook for therapeutic choir leaders. Although this was developed in a specific context, generalisation is supported by the broad principles of the VOCCAL Framework and options for practice. The Cycle 6 focus group participants asked for publication of parallel digital and print editions.



All participants will receive a summary of findings. Public and professional dissemination will include presentations, digital media, and articles in academic journals and community newsletters. Performances and recordings of original songs resulting from the research process will also enable choir members to take an active part in dissemination and advocacy.

Methodology and Methods

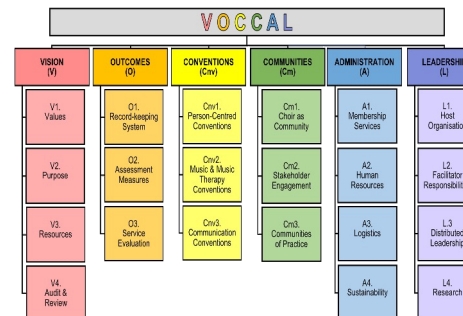
Action research is a paradigm that moves beyond knowledge creation towards social activism.³ As a form of applied research, action research has developed into a family of approaches that address practical problems in many disciplines. The research design evolves as a series of observation-action-reflection cycles as the study unfolds – including innovative parallel cycles in this study.

Methods included:

- Audio-visual analysis^{4,5}
- Qualitative document analysis⁶
- Interviews^{7,8} and focus groups⁹
- Analysis of singing and songwriting protocols^{10,11}
- Narrative analysis¹²
- Poetic analysis¹³
- Reflexive thematic analysis^{14,15}

Findings

This framework, initially developed in Cycle 3, was refined in Cycles 5 and 6. From this, an ecological model of practice¹⁶ was developed, displayed on the handbook cover (above right). This represents a *living theory*, grounded in practice.^{17,18}



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