


Living Words: An Assessment of a Creative Writing Program for Older Adults

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PRESENTED BY:
AFTEN BLACKWELL, TAYLOR FENIG, MARIE HEWES, CAROLINE LIDDY, AND EMILY LOEBER

MENTOR:
DR. KARA BOPP, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY


The Living Words Program



- Creative writing program designed for older adults
- Conducted in a group setting
- Goal is to try to encourage individuals to have fun with writing

Experience Living Words: A Writing Prompt


- Who are they?
- Where did they come from?
- What is happening in this photograph?
- Why was it taken?
- What time period is this taking place?



Hypothesized Benefits of Living Words


- **Social Benefits**
 - Social opportunities
- **Emotional Benefits**
 - Increases confidence
 - Increases resilience to stressful life events such as the loss of a loved one
 - Greater overall life satisfaction
- **Cognitive Benefits**
 - Preserve cognitive functioning by strengthening neural connections

Procedure




- LW participants vs. Controls
- Consent and demographic forms
- **T1 assessments:**
 - **Social:** Life Satisfaction Index (LSI), Social Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ)
 - **Emotional:** Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), Reminiscence Function Scale (RFS)
 - **Cognitive:** Verbal Fluency Task (FAS), Digit Span, Mini Mental Status Exam (MMSE)
- **T2 assessments:**
 - **Social:** LSI
 - **Emotional:** GDS
 - **Cognitive:** FAS
- Qualitative interview
- Independent testing schedules


Living Words Workshop Locations




Shepherd's Center
(Taylor Fenig)



Eden Terrace
(Marie Hewes & Caroline Liddy)



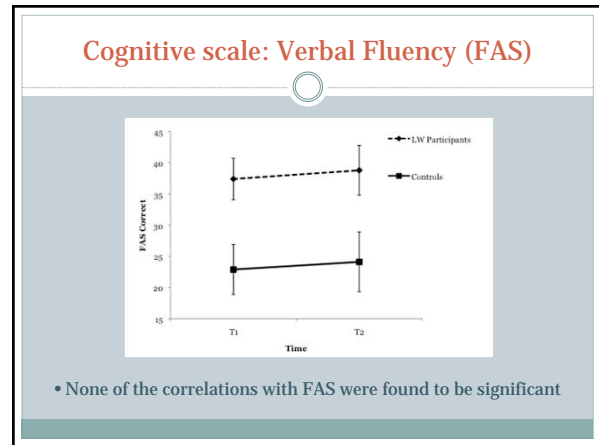
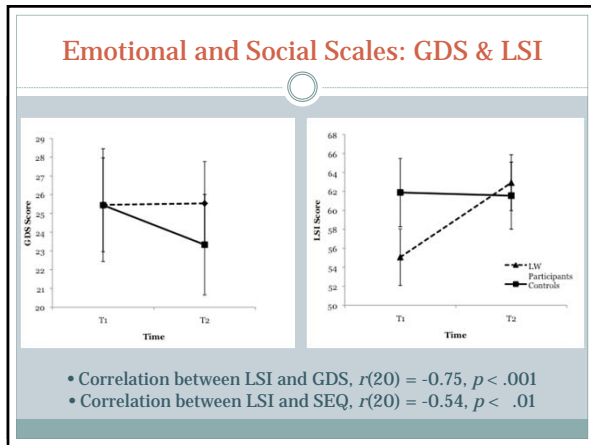
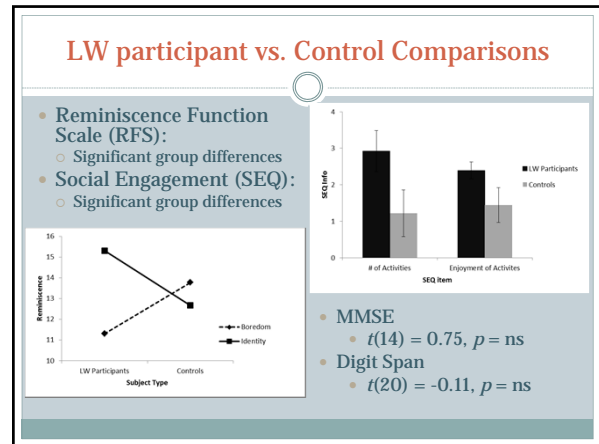
Skylyn Place
(Aften Blackwell)



Dillon Pointe
(Emily Loeber)

LW Workshop Participants

| Facility | Type of Facility | # of Participants | Mean Participant Age | Ethnicity of Participants | Sex of Participants | Mean Education (years) | Mean MMSE |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Dillon Pointe | Assisted Living | 3 | 83.67 | Caucasian | Female | 14 | 21 |
| Eden Terrace | Assisted Living | 8-10 | 88 | Caucasian | 2 males, 6-8 females | 16 | 29 |
| Shepherd Center | Activity Center for Older Adults | 8-10 | 78.89 | Caucasian, 1 African American | 3 males, 5-7 females | 13.56 | 28.6 |
| Skylyn | Independent & assisted living | 2-4 | 77.75 | Caucasian | Female | 14.4 | 26 |
| All | Range from assisted living - activity center | 21-27 | 82.1 | Mostly Caucasian | 5 males the rest were females | 14.49 | 26.15 |



Qualitative Results

- Social:**
 - Participants enjoyed getting to know the other group members
 - Believed LW gave them an opportunity to meet people that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to get to know
 - Felt that the other members of the group were supportive
- Emotional**
 - Writing as a distracter from daily worries
 - Found workshop prompts to be cathartic
- Cognitive**
 - Improved memory recall
 - Able to think more clearly
 - Encouraged to think deeper

Discussion

- Potential Benefits:**
 - Social benefits - Increased life satisfaction
 - Emotional benefits - Stress relief
 - Cognitive benefits - Improved clarity and memory

Limitations

- Locations were not willing to add program
- Fear of workshop
- No random assignment to conditions
- Physical and cognitive deficits

Future Directions

- Increase sample size
- Random assignment
- Additional assessments
- Retesting of participants
- Instructional book

Thank You!

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Research Conducted By:



*Aften Blackwell, Marie Hewes, Taylor Fenig,
Caroline Liddy, Emily Loeber*