


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

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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)



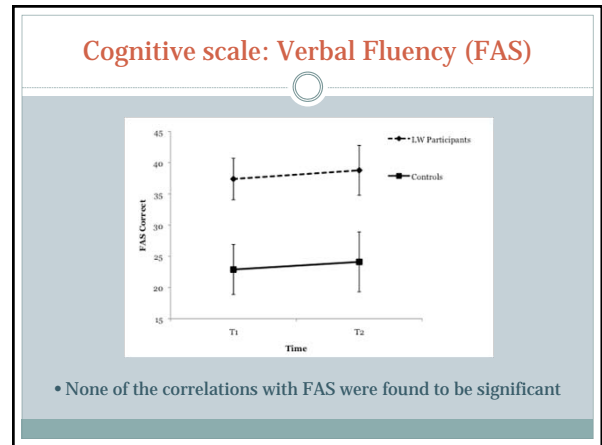
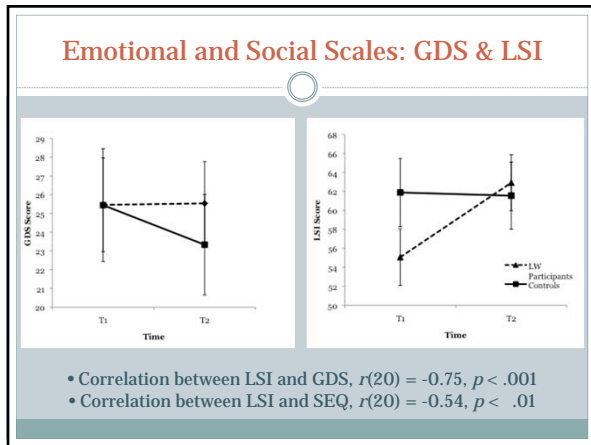
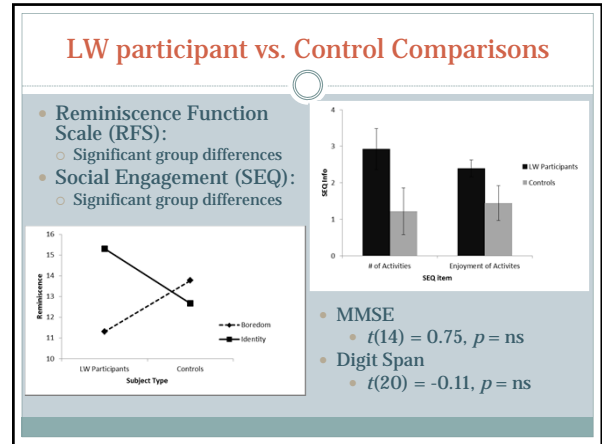
Skylyn Place
(Aften Blackwell)



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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