

# ORAL PAPER PRESENTATION 4: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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## **Connected: The role of mobile technologies and online environments in supporting creative musical experience among older adults**

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**Purpose** Music participation amongst older adults has been linked with multiple quality-of-life benefits, including creativity and wellbeing (Creech, 2019). In this vein, mobile technologies, such as iPads and their applications have been shown to facilitate in-group music learning and participation, creativity and connection amongst older adults (Creech, 2019; Liu-Rosenbaum & Creech, 2021; Engelbrecht & Shoemark, 2015). Positioned within the interdisciplinary field of gerontechnology, this paper explores how technology may mediate access to creative musical experience in later-life. Specifically we address the questions: what are the learner perceptions associated with the use of mobile technologies (iPads) in the context of later-life creative music participation? What are the facilitation approaches that can support creative music-making with mobile technologies within in-person and online environments? **Method** Participatory Action Research (PAR) involved two community groups comprising adults aged 50+. Three eight-week cycles of 90-minute music workshops were held, the first two in person and the final cycle within an online environment. iPads equipped with music Applications were used with musical instruments. As workshop facilitators guided the musical activities, participants experimented with improvisation, rhythm, chord-making, songwriting and singing. Following transition to a virtual environment, these activities were carried out while navigating the “new to them” platform Zoom using various technological devices such as computers, laptops, cellphones, and iPads. This paper focuses on a thematic analysis of semi-structured participant interviews carried out before and following the workshop cycles. **Results and Discussion** Key findings demonstrated that although there was some fear and difficulty in using technology, there was a sense of achievement and surprise at the group's creative experience within face-to-face as well as online environments. Creative musical experience was a social activity, where technology was a mediating tool that provided an environment within which participants could connect through creative musical activities.

### **References**

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