

QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY:

A MONOGRAPH SERIES

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Edited by
Douglas Keith



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CONTRIBUTORS

Rodrigo Quiroga, MMT
Santiago, Chile

Ben Nicholson, MM, MMT, MT-BC
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

Lucy Bolger, B. Mus (Hons)(Mus Thrp.), PhD, RMT
Course Tutor
The Music Therapy Trust
New Delhi, India

Laura Beer, PhD, MT-BC
Director of Music Therapy
Chair of Art, Music, and Creative Arts Therapies Department
Marylhurst University
Marylhurst, Oregon USA

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Barcelona Publishers is pleased to present Volume Ten of *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy*, showcasing the work of four researchers with a diverse set of topics and methodologies.

Two studies in Volume Ten explore different experiences that therapists have in their clinical work. Rodrigo Quiroga presents a study on challenging moments with clients experienced by music therapists, a common experience of many music therapists. He describes these challenging moments, how music therapists approach them, and their potential value for the therapeutic process and therapists themselves. By contrast, Ben Nicholson presents a grounded theory study on music-elicited peak experiences of music therapists, experiences usually described as positive. Nicholson interviewed music therapists, focusing on how they describe peak experiences, the elements of peak experiences, therapist attributes, personality types, and effects of peak experiences.

When considered in relation to one another, these two studies call to mind an early study that appeared in this journal (Comeau, 2004) that explored therapists' experiences of being effective and ineffective. Each explicates one pole of a theoretical spectrum of experience, ranging from positive to negative. These studies have significant value for music therapists and music therapy students, as they are important reminders that all music therapists experience highs and lows in their work, thus normalizing these experiences. The results of these studies also question the dominant narrative in the US of a neat and clean relationship between music therapy "input" and therapeutic "output."

The two other studies in Volume Ten are welcome additions to the body of research in music therapy in which user perspectives are more prominent. Lucy Bolger has contributed to the ongoing discourse of Community Music Therapy with an action research study. Proponents of community music therapy (Stige & Aaro, 2012) and resource-oriented music therapy (Rolvjord, 2010) value collaboration by all participants—therapists, people formerly called clients or patients, and other community members. Bolger's study is noteworthy for several reasons. Bolger engaged people normally considered marginalized in society in a collaborative music project, leading to a high level of participation in both the project and the research process. The level of engagement shown in this study is highly unusual, simply because of the difficulties inherent in reaching marginalized people. The themes that emerged from the project challenge some tendencies in broader society to see people on the margins as a homogenous group. Finally, Bolger's description of the cyclical nature of the action research is a helpful resource for other researchers interested in this approach.

Laura Beer presents a study of the experiences of Asian students who came to the US to study music therapy. In her arts-based study, she engaged participants in multiple reflective steps about their experiences as students. Beer describes in clear detail the many challenges, both internal and external, that these students face. This study is noteworthy for its inclusion of recordings made by the students during the study, and like Bolger's study, for its detailed descriptions of epistemology and methodology.

Taken together, the studies presented in Volume Ten provide perspectives from music therapists, music therapy students, and music therapy "users." Barcelona Publishers hopes that these studies prove to be interesting and thought-provoking for music therapists, music therapy students, and other interested people.

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